



Houghton & Wyton

Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 - 2036



March 2018

Part A – Referendum Neighbourhood Plan

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This does not form part of the statutory development plan – it contains community aspirations and Parish Council ambitions that cannot be included in policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

Index of policies

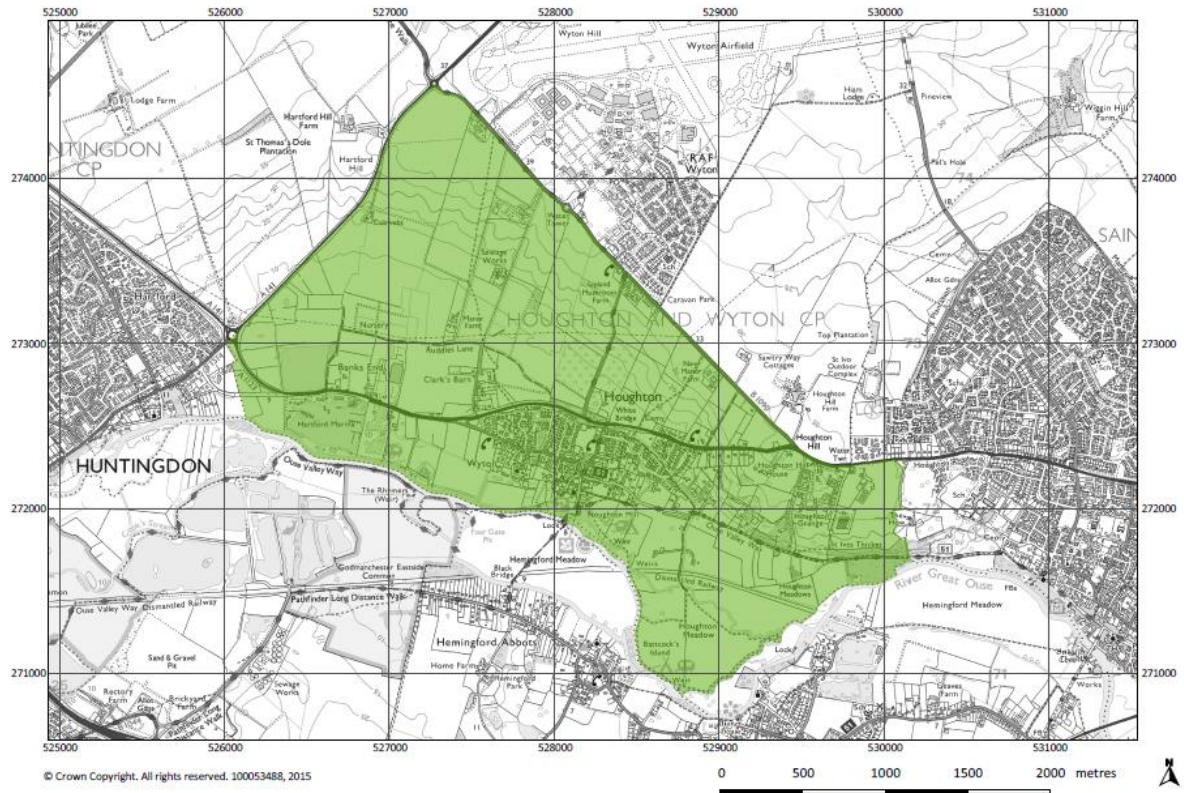
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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This is the Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton and Wyton Parish (hereafter known as 'Houghton and Wyton'). It is a new type of planning document produced in the Parish. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act that came into force in 2011.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to represent one part of the development plan for the parish over the period 2015 to 2036. For clarity, the development plan consists of any planning policies currently adopted by the local planning authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.3 The policies in this plan have been produced to be in general conformity with the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009. In addition, the plan has given due regard to the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan which, when adopted, will cover the period to 2036.
- 1.4 The Plan therefore provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long term future of Houghton and Wyton and its surrounding countryside for the period 2015 to 2036. The Plan gives all residents ownership of managing what happens in the community. It is not just for the Parish Council but for all. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Houghton and Wyton Parish and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1.5 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate specific sites for development the group asked for sites to come forward as part of the process and these sites were assessed against the objectives and are shown as supporting evidence.
- 1.6 In order to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, Houghton and Wyton Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group which comprised six Parish Councillors and a number of local volunteers.
- 1.7 The Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan will cover all of Houghton and Wyton Parish. In preparing the Plan, there has been dialogue with the adjoining parishes of Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, Godmanchester, Wyton on the Hill and St Ives Town Council as well as with Huntingdon District Council. An application for neighbourhood plan designation was approved by Huntingdon District Council on 19th December 2012.
- 1.8 The map in Figure 1 below shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Houghton and Wyton Parish.

Figure 1 Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan area



- 1.9 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish and provide guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Houghton and Wyton, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.10 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, the Parish and District Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.

How to read this document

Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies presented which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. There is also a summary of how each policy contributes towards the objectives of the plan. The policies themselves are presented in the blue boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

How the Neighbourhood Plan is organised

1.11 This Plan is divided into thirteen sections:

- Section 1: Houghton and Wyton Today; a brief description of the Parish today and the key issues that have influenced the Plan
- Section 2: The Vision for Houghton and Wyton over the plan period.
- Section 3: Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Objectives; this sets out what Houghton and Wyton wants to achieve over the plan period.
- Sections 4-13: Neighbourhood Plan Policies; which set out policies to support the overall vision, and the way in which the objectives will be reached, Policies are arranged in the following themes:
 - Village limits/built-up area
 - Natural environment
 - Tourism
 - Community infrastructure
 - Traffic and transport
 - Flood risk and drainage
 - Business
 - Housing
 - Design of new development
 - Monitoring
- There is also a glossary of relevant terms.
- Part B - Community Aspirations. This part consists of non-planning issues that the community raised as being important. The Parish Council has not ignored these important issues, but as this is a statutory planning document it cannot include non-planning issues. This section is included in the Neighbourhood Plan to demonstrate to the community that all of their concerns have been taken into account and will be addressed by the Parish Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

History of Houghton and Wyton

- 2.1 Houghton and Wyton lie side by side on the north bank of the River Great Ouse, some two miles west of St Ives in Cambridgeshire. In 1934 the two villages were united to form the civil parish of Houghton and Wyton. The distinctive features that make the village a popular visitor destination include Houghton Mill, Houghton Equestrian Centre, Huntingdon Wyevale Garden Centre, the river Great Ouse and its flood meadows, plus the range of historic houses and cottages. In this Neighbourhood Plan Houghton and Wyton are referred to as one village.
- 2.2 A significant number of prehistoric, Iron Age and Saxon finds have been discovered in the parish and there have been a scattering of archaeological finds along Houghton Hill in the east of the parish, indicating the presence of people here from very early times, including stone and flint tools, a Bronze Age 'Beaker' burial and a Romano-British cemetery. Thicket Lane, joining the settlement with St Ives, is recorded in the Historic Environment Record as a monument. It appears that Houghton was founded during the 7th century. The name comes from 'tun' meaning enclosure, farmstead, settlement, village; 'hoh' is also old English meaning a heel, or projection of land below the crest of a hill. Together these two words as 'Hohtun' describe a settlement on a projecting hillside – a description that fits the hillside rather than the riverside settlement seen today. The village is sited around a green, (which is now a tarmac area where 5 roads converge) which was once larger than it is now. Wyton, perhaps a century or so later in date, grew up west of Houghton along the same road and originally may have been a hamlet, which developed into a fully-fledged village later. The curious network of tracks known as The Lanes in Houghton is part of the old network of paths originally leading to open fields and meadows.
- 2.3 Houghton Mill is one of the last and most complete water mills to survive on the river Great Ouse. There has been a mill on the site since 974, originally belonging to Ramsey Abbey. The current mill dates from the 17th century and was extended in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is listed Grade II*. The mill ceased working in 1930 at which stage local people helped to buy it and donated it to the National Trust. It was used by the Youth Hostel Association from 1934 until 1983. Thereafter it fell into relative disrepair before work commenced in 1998 on a complete restoration project to restore the waterwheels and install a turbine. In 2012, a recycled pair of millstones was installed, driven by electricity to enable the Mill to operate all year round. The National Trust acquired the 19th century mill house in 1983 and developed a tearoom and toilets.
- 2.4 The Parish Church of St Mary (Listed Grade II) in Houghton, mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), is built in the Perpendicular style, mainly 14th century but with a 13th century chancel rebuilt in 1851 and an embattled west tower with a spire containing five bells. The chancel has an elegant piscina (double stone basin) and a stone seat in early English style. The pulpit was made in 1893 from the wood of a tree from Houghton Hill House. A new stained glass window was installed to commemorate the Millennium.
- 2.5 The former Parish Church in Wyton, listed Grade I, dates from the early 13th century with a 14th century chancel and a 19th century north aisle.
- 2.6 The many attractive houses and cottages which border the streets and lanes of Houghton and Wyton form one of the distinctive features of the parish. The oldest surviving houses were originally yeoman-farmers' homes and of timber construction. These tend to be situated on the

principal streets and basically consist of three rooms on the ground floor and three rooms above. Another style of housing to be found in the village is that of husbandmen or lesser farmers, usually found down back streets and lanes. The village also boasts some remaining examples of labourers' cottages. Within the parish there are 57 listed buildings (of which three are Grade II*).

- 2.7 With the coming of the Enclosures Act in 1773 and new farming techniques, the reliance on farming as the major source of employment began to decline and with this many of the older houses disappeared or fell into disrepair.
- 2.8 However, from about 1840 onwards the villages became very popular, partly due to the river Great Ouse and the popularity of holidaying and spending leisure time on the river. This attracted a new style of gentry to the village who built the grand houses of the village, including Houghton Hill House, Houghton Grange, The Dingle, The Elms and Houghton Manor. During this period many earlier houses were modernized and extended, disguising their origins.
- 2.9 Wyton experienced the first post-war expansion when a small group of council houses was built at Manor Close in the 1920s. This was followed by the construction in Houghton of Hill Estate (1952) and Brookside (1966). A controversial estate of nearly 50 bungalows was later built at Victoria Crescent, gaining contemporary praise for their design. Between 1975 and 1978 three new developments were constructed on the land of Manor Farm in Wyton, these being St Margaret's Road, Loxley Green and Warren Close.
- 2.10 The Ministry of Defence sold off housing adjacent to the airfield in 2000, creating a new community. This was followed by the development of Pine Hill Park, consisting of around 50 park homes located along Sawtry Way. The village of Houghton and Wyton has expanded significantly since the 1950s, but has managed to retain its village character.

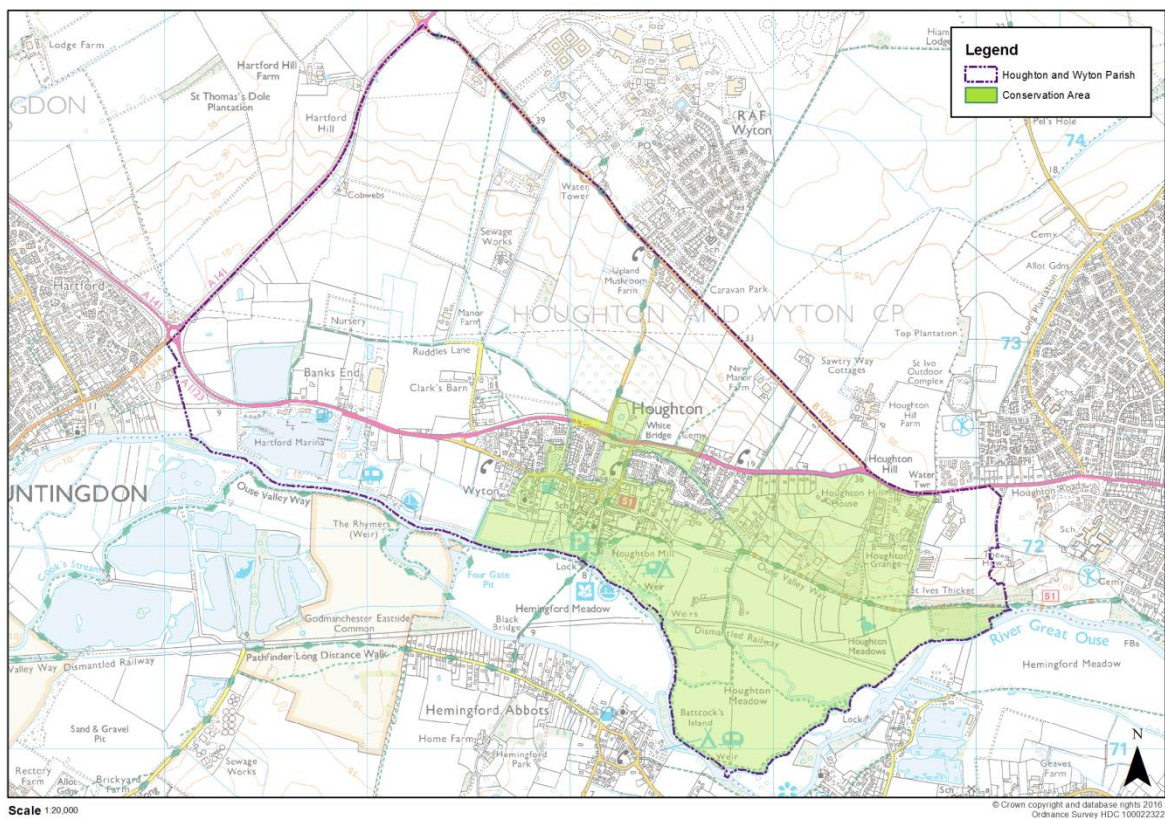
Houghton and Wyton today

- 2.11 The Parish of Houghton and Wyton is in a particularly attractive area of the Great Ouse River valley with splendid riverside meadows and the rising landscape towards the North providing a backdrop to the river views.
- 2.12 Located on the western side of East Anglia there is good road access North and South via the A1 and East and West by the A14. Huntingdon is on the East Coast main railway line with fast services to London and the North. The new guided bus has proved successful allowing improved access for residents going to Cambridge and tourists from Cambridge visiting the Parish.
- 2.13 Local services are provided by Huntingdon (with its local hospital) and St Ives, both within three miles. All major services are at Peterborough and Cambridge, twenty miles away, and include the University, Addenbrookes and Papworth Hospitals (all world class).
- 2.14 On the south side of the A1123 are Daylock Marine Services and Hartford marina, together with its restaurant, flats and floating lodges, providing leisure activities on the river, plus holiday and permanent accommodation. On the north side of that road is Huntingdon and Wyevale garden centre, a shopping destination attracting people from a wide area. Further towards Hartford is a commercial fishing lake.
- 2.15 On the northern edge of the Parish, along the south side of Sawtry Way, is a commercial area, opposite RAF Wyton, providing local employment and opposite Wyton-on-the-Hill is Pine Hill Park mobile homes providing low-cost housing for the over 55s, in an attractive hillside setting. Closer to St Ives is Houghton Equestrian Centre which is a high quality facility for horse owners

and visitors and provides local employment. Nearer the village on the eastern side of Mere Way is an alpaca farm which may develop as a visitors' centre.

- 2.16 Within the village there are two pubs, three small shops, and a mini-supermarket which houses a post office. The village also boasts a successful primary school and St Mary's Church. The river provides the southern boundary and there are the navigation lock and the historic flour mill, caravan park, car park and tearooms managed by the National Trust which together form a major tourist attraction.
- 2.17 The Conservation Area boundary was re-drawn in 2012 and covers an area of considerable historic, architectural and archaeological interest demonstrating more than a thousand years of continuous settlement.

Figure 2 Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area



- 2.18 The parish is thus an attractive place to live and to visit therefore the neighbourhood plan aims to maintain and enhance this situation. Therefore a wide range of topics have been considered in producing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Green spaces



- 2.19 The built-up area of the village has very little land that is not developed. The existing green spaces provide recreation opportunities, open vistas and a refuge for wildlife. They form a key aspect in the character of the village.
- 2.20 In the remainder of the Parish a large proportion of the land is agricultural which creates the rural environment in which the village sits.
- 2.21 The land that forms the green gaps between the parish and its neighbours are of particular importance.

Tourism



- 2.22 Due to its location, history and character, the parish is a popular destination for quiet tourism with an estimated 100,000 visitors per year, many of whom stay in the National Trust caravan park or local B&Bs. Visitors can enjoy the River Great Ouse, its lock, meadows and see the flour grinding at the historic National Trust Mill. The village centre with its attractive clock tower provides shops and a public house for both visitors and residents.
- 2.23 Walkers can ramble across the meadows, take the village trail to view a wide range of older buildings or walk one of the varied footpaths such as the one which gently climbs up to Wyton on the Hill for uninterrupted views across the Ouse Valley. Winding its way through the village, the Ouse Valley Way National Footpath provides easy walking access to St Ives, via the attractive Thicket Path, or to Godmanchester by the river through fields and past fishing lakes of the nature reserve. For those wishing to get on the water, the local boat hire and the marinas provide facilities for river craft and anglers, who also enjoy the local fishing lakes.
- 2.24 Tourism is thus a major contributor to the local economy supporting employment and business. Developments that support tourism are therefore encouraged but only if they do not have a negative impact on residents or the character of the area.

Leisure, recreation and community

- 2.25 The village is very active and the Parish magazine, delivered free to all households, is a great success in keeping everyone informed. There are good sports facilities for football, numerous cricket teams, tennis, keep fit and bowls on the Playing Field plus two play areas for younger children. Also located on the playing field are the Pavilion, the Scout Hut and Tennis Club hut. The Pavilion and the Memorial Hall provide indoor venues for a wide variety of clubs and organisations from Pilates to the Gardening Club and cater for all ages from toddlers to the over-sixties. The School, St Mary's Church and the St Mary's Centre offer further indoor venues.



- 2.26 In early December, the Clock Tower, shops and pub are festooned with twinkling lights and a large Christmas tree is erected ready for the great 'switch on' by Father Christmas.



- 2.27 Feast Week takes place during the first week in July. Activities through the week have included a bowls match, an angling contest, a duck race, junior tennis, a Quiz night, and a car treasure hunt. Something for everyone!



- 2.28 A new mini music festival started in 2013 and due to its success was repeated in 2014 and 2015. It is hoped this will continue as a regular event in the future.

Infrastructure

- 2.29 The A1123 is one of the busiest non-arterial roads in Cambridgeshire and divides the village from the rest of the Parish to the North. The community feels access to and from the village is arduous at busy times and could be considered dangerous at all times. The lack of pedestrian crossings reduces access to the village by other parishioners, limits the use of footpaths to the North and is one reason for the lack of stops for the guided bus. However the serious noise pollution from the road has recently been reduced by a new quieter surface.
- 2.30 Parking in the village is limited, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day, resulting in congestion and frustration. The centre of the village is called the 'Green' which is the junction of five roads and is a through bus route. It is the heart of the village and its character must be preserved according to the Neighbourhood Plan Survey
- 2.31 There are no public toilets in the village despite the large number of visitors.

Business



- 2.32 There are 894 economically active residents (16 to 74 years) in the parish. Of these people, 50% are employed and 12% are self-employed. In total, 25% of the population is retired. ¹
- 2.33 From the recent NP survey there are approximately 300-400 people employed in businesses located in the Parish.

Housing



The Parish has the full range of dwelling types ² : Accommodation type	% of Total
Detached house or bungalow	51
Semi-detached house or bungalow	20
Terraced house or bungalow	5
Flat, maisonette or apartment	9
Caravan, other mobile or temporary structure	15

81% are owner occupied and the rest rented.

- 2.34 There are 826 households in the parish with a population of 1,817 giving an average household size of 2.2 persons. The age profile for the parish shows a low proportion (17%) aged less than

¹ 2011 Census

² 2011 Census

20 years compared to the district average of 24%. By contrast, the parish has a high proportion of people of retirement age – 26% compared to a district average of 16%³.

- 2.35 There is relatively little deprivation in Houghton and Wyton although 17 households reported overcrowding and 31 do not have central heating.⁴

Areas of distinctive character



- 2.36 The many attractive houses and cottages which border the streets and lanes of Houghton and Wyton form one of the distinctive features of the parish.

Quality of life



- 2.37 Residents reported their health as follows (2011 census):

- Very good = 857 (47%)
- Good = 646 (36%)
- Fair = 245 (13.5%)
- Bad/very bad = 64 (3.5%)

- 2.38 The parish provides an excellent quality of life and the maintenance of this is a priority for its residents. The recently enlarged Conservation Area recognised the importance of the special character and history of the village and the residents feel passionate about keeping this together with the preservation of the green spaces within the village and maintenance of the existing biodiversity within the parish.

- 2.39 This quality of life is considered to be under threat from two major and associated issues⁵:

³ 2011 Census

⁴ 2011 Census

⁵ 2013 neighbourhood plan Survey

- The continual growth of traffic on the A1123 and through the village which:
 - increases the delays and dangers of the village access points;
 - forms a barrier to the integration of the Parish to the north of the road with the village;
 - places increased pressure on parking in the village.
 - produces pollution (noise and emissions)
- Housing developments:
 - on the eastern edge which threaten the Parish's independence from St Ives;
 - piecemeal building to the west of the village which could result in a continual ribbon of development along the A1123 from St Ives to Huntingdon.

3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Challenges for Houghton and Wyton

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Houghton and Wyton. In summary these challenges are:
- **The need for increased sustainability** – in particular, reflecting the global threats of dependence on fossil fuels and imports for our basic food supply.
 - **Managing the pressure for new development** – and ensuring that the village remains as a village.
 - **Retaining the vibrancy of the retail outlets on offer** – particularly by taking advantage of opportunities to expand the shopping facilities in the village.
 - **Protecting the green spaces in and around the parish** – taking the opportunity to preserve and enhance green areas within and around the village.
 - **Retention of community assets** – recognising what these are and ensuring they are adequately protected.
 - **Improvement of facilities for community groups** – and ensuring that facilities continue to be maintained to a suitable standard to support a range of community activities.
 - **Car parking** – addressing problems in the village and the associated effects this has on the retail and services offered in the village.
 - **Addressing the housing needs of younger and older members of the community** – by ensuring that housing is developed which can provide flexibly for this range of needs.
 - **Providing appropriate employment opportunities** – particularly for small rural start-up businesses that need appropriate premises on flexible terms.
 - **Taking advantage of the tourism assets** – but in a way that ensures the additional visitors do not have a detrimental impact on the landscape, biodiversity or the quality of life of residents.
 - **Protecting and enhancing the character** – by improving the appearance of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings in Houghton and Wyton.

Vision for Houghton and Wyton

- 3.2 The vision for Houghton and Wyton is as follows:

We are an active, thriving, dynamic and cohesive community; proud to live in this special landscape which we are keen to share with others.

- 3.3 Our vision is of a parish that continues to be centred on the single village area of Houghton and Wyton. It will maintain and develop its character and retain its separate identity and location away from other nearby settlements. Our vision is of a village which links with its surrounding areas whilst retaining the historic centre as its heart:

- Links with the rural areas to the north and south and also the vital relationship with the River Great Ouse;
- Links to the east and west, with development at Houghton Grange consolidating its role as part of the single village area, reinforced through better physical linkages and an integrated community.

Protecting the landscape

- 3.4 In order to achieve the vision, it is necessary to protect our special landscape. As the landscape along the Ouse Valley is what makes this such a special place to live and visit, efforts should be made to enhance and protect the views, and to improve and extend the existing habitats and biodiversity.

Enhancing quality of life in the community

- 3.5 It has been commented upon that the people living in the parish are a 'dynamic and resourceful community'. It is vital that the potential of the existing assets of the parish are maximised to further improve the quality of life of the residents. To this end it is important for residents to be connected both physically through public transport links, cycleways, bridleways, footpaths and the river as well as electronically through maintaining and improving good broadband connections and mobile telephony. The A1123 road, with its issues of traffic volume and safety, will continue to be a main focus to improve villager's quality of life.
- 3.6 To develop our community further we are keen to explore opportunities that ensure the community grows stronger and more self-sufficient. For a truly sustainable community we are seeking to extend retail opportunities and improved access to public transport. If the pub and village shop were ever sold, the community has stated that it would be prepared to take over these vital village assets. We are also keen to maintain and extend the village clubs and societies and especially the playing field at the heart of the village, as these organisations and facilities form the backbone for the community.
- 3.7 At the heart of the village lies the Village Green which is beginning to look tired and does need an injection of new life. Car parking in the village is a major issue for residents, shoppers and visitors alike, and solutions need to be found which avoid the heart of the village being clogged up with parked cars.

Providing appropriate employment and tourism opportunities

- 3.8 Historically, employment in the village would have relied heavily on farming. When the village and surrounding area began attracting artists at the turn of the century, catering for the needs of visitors increased in importance. Our vision is to capitalise on this special place where we live and to extend and improve the visitor experience thereby increasing employment in this sector.
- 3.9 Currently there are approximately 300–400 people employed in businesses in the parish. We wish to increase this by encouraging the development of rural and craft workshops.
- 3.10 It is estimated that there are in excess of 100,000 visitors to the village every year,⁶ whether visiting the Mill, camping, cycling or walking. We would like to see this increased along a theme of 'quiet tourism' which could include, for example, expanding camping/tea room facilities, extending boat hire and moorings and developing fishing lakes, horse-riding and chalets.

⁶ Estimated over 100,000 visitors visit the National Trust Mill Car Park

Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.11 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

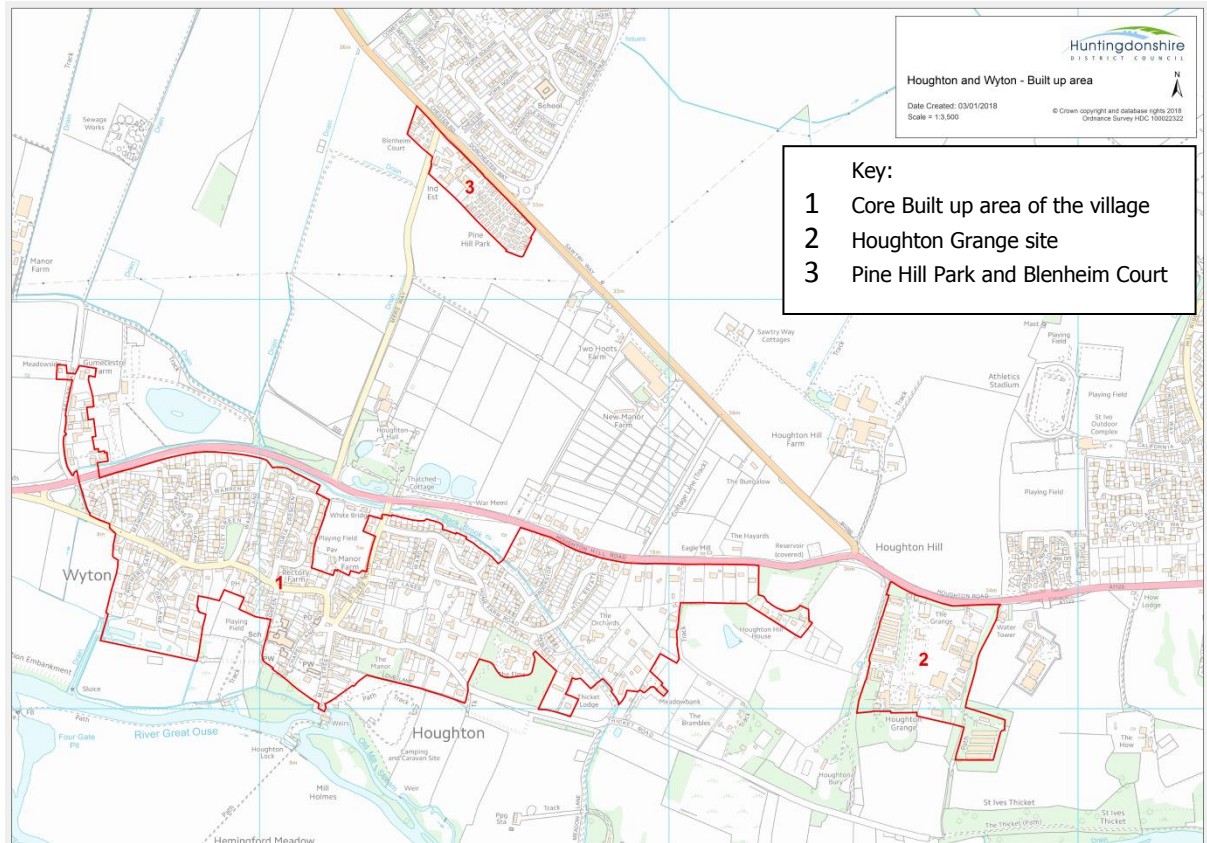
Objective	HWNP policy
Objective 1: To protect and enhance the green spaces of importance within the parish and to resist the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.	1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Objective 2: To protect and enhance the views identified in the conservation review (2012) that characterise the village.	1,2,3,4,5, 6, 7
Objective 3: To retain the separate identity of Houghton and Wyton as a small rural village and avoid any further merging with neighbouring towns and villages.	1, 3, 7
Objective 4: To protect and enhance the range and distribution of biodiversity in the parish.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Objective 5: To promote the growth in appropriate 'quiet tourism' (i.e. tourism which respects the character of the countryside) in order that the beautiful countryside of the River Great Ouse and meadows may be shared with visitors.	2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13,17
Objective 6: To expand existing agricultural and rural visitor facilities and attractions and develop appropriate new opportunities.	2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15
Objective 7: To provide accommodation for arts, crafts and leisure activities to meet the needs of the local community and visitors.	8, 9, 10, 11, 12,15
Objective 8: To support the retention of existing local services and businesses in the parish and actively encourage the development of new, small-scale businesses which benefit the community and visitors.	8, 10, 11, 15
Objective 9: To encourage the appropriate development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.	3, 8, 9, 10
Objective 10: To support small scale housing development schemes that are in keeping with the existing character of Houghton and Wyton.	1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 13,16, 17
Objective 11: To resist the loss of holiday accommodation within the parish to permanent residences.	8, 10
Objective 12: To maintain and enhance the distinctive Character Areas of the Parish as well as protecting the conservation area and the parish's historic and listed assets.	4, 5, 12,17
Objective 13: Increase the provision of housing that enables older people to downsize to a dwelling size and style appropriate for their changing needs.	16
Objective 14: To ensure maximum safety to road and footway users in the parish by improving traffic flow, car parking and public transport links.	12, 13, 16, 17
Objective 15: To control infrastructure developments so that the village's open and quiet character and its varied fabric is preserved and improved, while meeting the needs of the residents.	4, 5, 12, 13, 17
Objective 16: To steer new development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible.	1, 4, 9, 10,11,14, 15,16,17

4 BUILT UP AREA

Policy justification

- 4.1 The NPPF makes clear distinctions between built up areas and the countryside. To assist with interpretation of the neighbourhood plan's policies, built up areas have therefore been defined and mapped; all land outside the defined boundary is deemed to be countryside and subject to policies influencing development outside the built up area.

Figure 3 Houghton and Wyton built up area



Policy

Policy HWNP1 - Houghton and Wyton built up area

The built up area boundary for Houghton and Wyton is shown on Figure 3 above.

A built up area is defined as a distinct group of 30 or more homes and their immediate surroundings.

Other areas outside the built up area are part of the open countryside.

Proposals for development within the built up area will be guided by the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies and other policies in the development plan.

Proposals for development outside of the defined built up areas will be acceptable where they comply with relevant policies for building in the countryside.

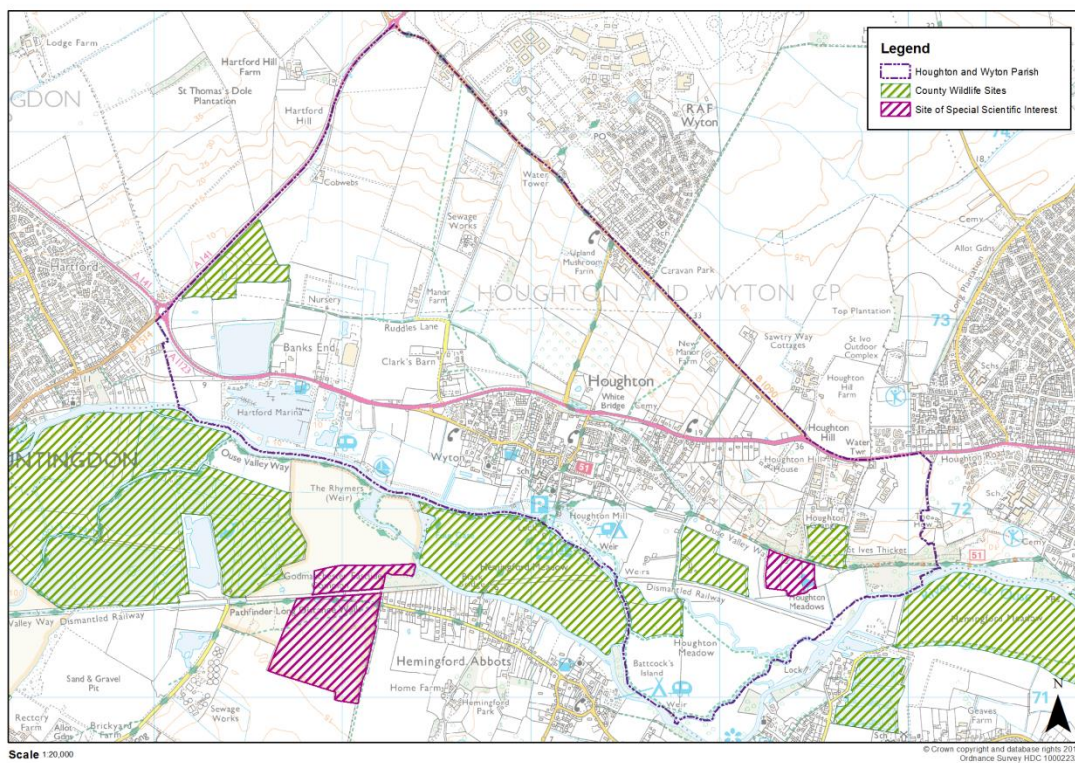
Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP1	1,2,3,10,16
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5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy justification

- 5.1 The NPPF recognises the local ecological networks and the hierarchy of designated sites. This policy seeks to recognise all the designated areas and welcomes developments that enhance or extend ecological corridors connecting them.
- 5.2 Within the parish there is a nationally recognised Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Houghton Meadow - as well as important habitats recognised as County Wildlife Sites (CWS). The purpose of these policies is to highlight those sites already designated and to provide a level of protection for non-statutory areas such as CWS. It aims to prevent harm through the direct and indirect impacts of development.
- 5.3 The Lawton Review concluded in 2014 that the protection of wildlife sites in isolation was not sufficient to protect England's biodiversity. The review identified the need for establishing a coherent ecological network that is more resilient to current and future pressures, which can be achieved by creating bigger wildlife sites of better quality which are better connected.

Figure 4 Map of SSSIs, CWS



Policy

Policy HWNP2 - Protection of sites

All new development should protect and, wherever possible, enhance biodiversity and establish, enhance or extend ecological corridors and the connectivity between them.

Development on land within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI interest, either individually or cumulatively, should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect is likely, permission should only be granted where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the site's features and any wider impacts on the national network of SSSIs.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP2	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10
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Prevention of coalescence with St Ives

- 5.4 Working together with policy HWNP1, this policy seeks to protect the village character and distinctiveness by retaining and enhancing a clear and obvious open land gap between the village and neighbouring market town of St Ives.
- 5.5 Historically the land identified in Development Plan documents separating Houghton & Wyton from St.Ives has comprised that land extending east of Houghton Grange and being made up of the St.Ives Golf Course, BBSRC Field and Thicket Wood.
- 5.6 Previous Inspectors of Development Plan documents have carefully described and defined the area in question using various terms such as 'green gap', 'open gap'; 'separation' and 'green wedge'. They have valued its importance using comments that it 'should not be impinged upon', 'not compromised' and 'should be protected', including that it was 'vital'.
- 5.7 The Inspector of the Core Strategy 2009 stated that 'separation should be retained' and during preparation of the plan, the SHLAA 2009 specifically excluded the BBSRC field from development for this reason.
- 5.8 Whilst recognising the vital importance of maintaining a gap between village and town, subsequent plans have allowed some development of the town westwards and onto the northern section of old St.Ives golf course. In so doing this has reduced the area of land capable of physically separating the communities.
- 5.9 The depletion of historic land area once making up the 'green gap' now means that the BBSRC field occupies the only undeveloped frontage adjoining the A1123. It represents the last undeveloped and largely open area of agricultural and grassland countryside east of the village, as well as running north to south, uninterrupted from the A1123 south to the Thicket.
- 5.10 As a consequence the BBSRC field has gained importance in ensuring anti coalescence is maintained.
- 5.11 Whilst the BBSRC field together with the Thicket wood immediately to the south of it, remains the cornerstone of this policy, it should be noted that the surrounding areas of land which knit together in a patchwork across Houghton Hill, and continue to include the remaining undeveloped southern slopes of the old golf course (although not within the designated area of

this Neighbourhood Plan) ; the county wildlife site (south of Houghton Grange); as well as the albeit secondary, more manicured gardens belonging to the scattering of houses west of Houghton Grange; are all now increasingly important in helping to maintain the perception of separation.

- 5.12 Whilst recognising an increased reliance upon the wider area working together to deliver the objective of anti coalescence, the Core Strategy 2009 does not include a specific anti-coalescence policy which brings these areas together and defines them as a gap.
- 5.13 The importance to the community of anti coalescence between Houghton and Wyton the western edge of St Ives has historically been very significant. This continues to be the case as evidenced through the funding of a court case, a petition of over 700 signatures and many letters to the District Council on the subject as well as the Neighbourhood Plan surveys and consultations. It is the opinion of the community of Houghton and Wyton that, with the growth of neighbouring St Ives, assimilation would not be possible without totally destroying the historic character of the parish and the settlements.
- 5.14 It is therefore the purpose of HWNP policy 3 to define and protect those areas of land responsible for delivering both the actual and perceived anti coalescence of village and town as experienced from road, footpaths, meadow or river.

Policy justification

- 5.15 Huntingdonshire is characterised by a variety of individual towns and villages. However, as stated in the Local Development Scoping Report 2007 which informed the Core Strategy 2009, the extent of urban development over the past 50 years has transformed the appearance of its market towns and has also had a major impact on many of the villages. It went on to say that in some cases this has led to the incorporation of previously distinct settlements such as Eaton Socon (St. neots) and Hartford (Huntingdon).
- 5.16 Houghton and Wyton can contribute to maintaining this rich tapestry by way of ensuring the continued separation between the built up area of the village and the town of St Ives. This will help to protect the special character of Houghton and Wyton which has a clear and distinct identity as a village from that of St Ives as a market town.
- 5.17 The landscape of Houghton Hill is valued as a significant and unique topographical feature in the area forming a key element in long distance views across the Ouse Valley and contributing to the setting of both Houghton and Wyton and St Ives.
- 5.18 Historically Houghton Hill House and Houghton Grange stood in extensive grounds somewhat detached from the eastern end of Houghton. Housebuilding since the 1950s has extended the village eastwards such that Houghton Hill House is now connected to the eastern end of the defined built up area. Houghton Hill house has an entrance from the A1123 with a section of landscaped garden with ornamental tree cover fronting the road and helping to partially conceal the house.
- 5.19 Next to this is Houghton Grange which has been identified as an allocated development site within the Core Strategy. This site is detached from the core village and when developed will be large enough to create its own built up area. The woodland belt surrounding the site on three sides to the south, east and west, does screen views of the site. This is particularly important on the eastern flank and to the south where it links to Houghton Meadow county wildlife site and leads down to countryside footpaths.

- 5.20 On the northern edge of the site, two large listed gate houses front onto the road on either side of a long wide entrance. A water tower is also situated on the north-eastern corner next to the A1123 and both form landmarks when travelling along this road.
- 5.21 To the north of the A1123 recent development in St Ives has extended westwards such that it now directly abuts the extensive open farmland rising to the north of Houghton Grange; however, this land lies within the parish of Wyton on the Hill and is outside the scope of this neighbourhood plan.
- 5.22 Westward of Houghton Grange, a scattering of individual properties and gardens create a patchwork and populate the ridge and lower slopes before connecting with the built up area of the core village.
- 5.23 The eastern edge is separated from St Ives by a more open and larger tract of land, known as the BBSRC Field. It is the only significant natural grassland area left between the village and the town. It is also the last remaining area of open frontage along the A1123 affording glimpses of long distance views from the road. Taken together with the Thicket wood it is the only area of land which runs uninterrupted by housing north to south from the road to the valley floor. It does contain two small groups derelict buildings on its western edge, formerly used in association with Houghton Grange as a poultry research station. One of these groups is attached to the south western corner of Houghton Grange and has been included within the built up area specified in Policy HNWP1. Once again this is heavily screened from the southern approaches by mature trees.
- 5.24 The District's historical Development Planning documentation stretching back over 20 years has consistently recognised the BBSRC field and Thicket wood as being at the heart of providing the important and substantial separation of Houghton & Wyton from St.Ives.
- 5.25 In the development of the Core Strategy 2009 the BBSRC Field is expressly treated by the source material for Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy as being unsuitable for residential development, precisely because of its importance in forming the landscape gap between St Ives and Houghton.
- 5.26 Further support for the above interpretation comes from the Core Strategy's express saving of Policies EN 15 and EN17 of the 1995 Local Plan.
- 5.27 With the granting of planning permission and current building programme for the old St.Ives golf course, the remaining land i.e. the BBSRC field and Thicket wood, has become significantly more important to maintain separation. However, it is also much more apparent that in order to maintain a meaningful perception of separation, both visually and physically, this now has to work in conjunction with other areas of undeveloped and unallocated land lying between the two settlements.
- 5.28 This policy recognises this need, ensuring that coalescence with St Ives is prevented and the special character of Houghton and Wyton is therefore retained. In doing so it puts the BBSRC field and Thicket wood at the heart of that area essential to ensuring anti coalescence, together with the surrounding area of the County wildlife site (south of Houghton Grange) and the gardens west of Houghton Grange (but excluding the built up areas defined in HWNP1).
- 5.29 The aim of preventing the coalescence of St Ives and Houghton and Wyton has, however, to be balanced against the fact that Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy allocates about 400 houses to a significant greenfield development to the west of the town. Planning permission has been granted for some of these houses a number of which have been built. Decisions as to where the remainder of these houses will be located will be made in the emerging Local Plan.

Policy

Policy HWNP3 – Anti -coalescence

Development proposals should respect the individual and distinct identities of the village of Houghton and Wyton and the town of St Ives. Development will not be permitted if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in the loss of the visual and physical separation between these two settlements, or would lead to their coalescence.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9,
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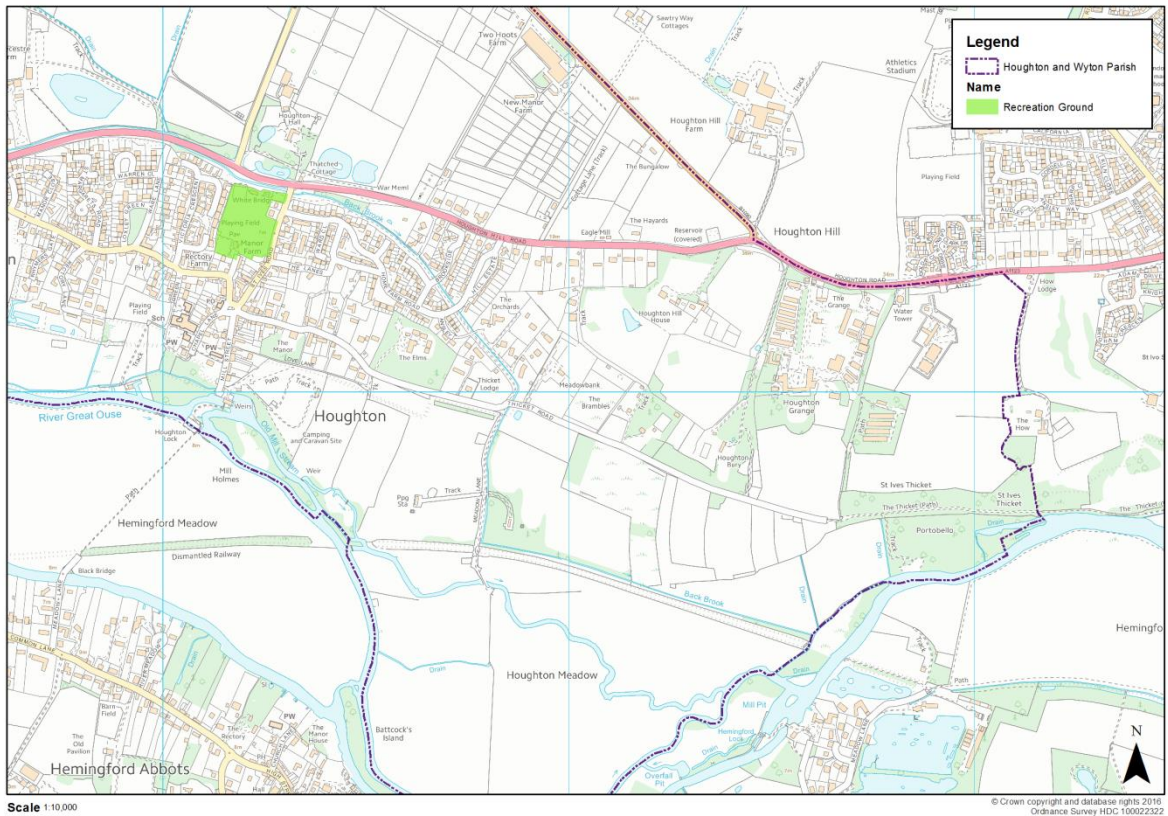
Local Green Spaces

- 5.30 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the community was asked to consider if there were any important green open spaces of value in the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect this site.

Policy justification

- 5.31 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF says that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:
- *"where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
 - *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."*
- 5.32 Whilst the village has seen some development during the second half of the twentieth century, it retains a number of green spaces that contribute to its character and provide opportunities for informal and formal recreation. This policy wishes to see the most important of these spaces protected for future generations.

Figure 6 Map of Local Green Space



- **Houghton and Wyton Playing Field** - because of its recreation value. Lying in the heart of the village with boundaries abutting Victoria Crescent, St Ives Road and the A1123 provides a place for both formal and informal recreation. The field was given in trust to the village and is currently part owned by the Parish Council, which purchased their share in 1962, and the Eastgate Trust. The Playing Field is home to the village football, cricket teams, the village bowls, tennis and 'keep-fit'. The Pavilion and Scout Hut sits on the field, providing a venue for all scouts and guides as well as being available for hire. The field also hosts significant events within the village calendar – Feast week and music festival as well as many other one offs and charity fundraising events. It is a meeting place, dog walking and social recreation place for the village. There is a car park for users of the playing field.



Policy

Policy HWNP4 - Protection and maintenance of Local Green Space

In recognition of the value to the local community , the following area is designated as Local Green Space and will be protected from development other than in very special circumstances:

- Houghton and Wyton Playing Field

This Local Green Space is shown on the map in Figure 6.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP4	1, 2, 4, 12, 15, 16
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Verges and Greens

Policy justification

- 5.33 The verges and greens are important because they contribute towards the village’s character and distinctiveness. They also perform a biodiversity function, being a place where various species thrive. It is therefore important that the most significant of these greens and verges are protected. The verges and greens identified for special protection are identified in Appendix 2.
- 5.34 The verges and greens will need to be subject to a separate management plan, to be drawn up by the Parish Council in partnership with the relevant authority.

Policy HWNP5 – Greens and verges

The green areas and verges identified in the appendix are valued for their biodiversity and contribution to the village’s character and distinctiveness. Development that protects and enhances the openness and biodiversity of these areas will be supported. Development that would detract from the special characteristics or biodiversity of these areas will be resisted.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP5	1, 2, 4, 12, 15
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Biodiversity

- 5.35 Houghton and Wyton contain a large area of floodplain meadows, some of which is designated but the majority of which is impoverished from a biodiversity perspective. There has been a significant loss of species-richness in the riverside meadows. A key objective for the Ouse Valley area of greenspace enhancement is the restoration of species rich floodplain meadows.

5.36 The aim of this policy is to:

- protect the existing biodiversity assets of the parish;
- enhance the number and range of species, especially those species on Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists;
- create new woodland;
- improve wildlife corridors to create better connectivity
- manage hedgerows appropriately; and
- work with farmers to minimise the damage to biodiversity through their actions.

Policy justification

5.37 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that “the planning system should minimise impacts on biodiversity...by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.”

5.38 It goes on to state at paragraph 117 that, “to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations.”

5.39 The Huntingdonshire Core Strategy recognises the importance of biodiversity and in particular the sensitive nature of the Great Ouse Valley. Policy CS9 which seeks to create new green infrastructure specifically identifies the need for coordinated action to create new wildlife habitats to increase biodiversity.

5.40 The lowland hay meadows are characterised by species rich swards including, great burnet, meadowsweet, meadow buttercup, yellow rattle and lady’s bedstraw and at Houghton Meadow, down the Thicket, it is recorded that the scarce green winged orchid is present. The great crested newt has been recorded at Houghton Hill.

5.41 The banks of the river and its backwaters are characterised by willows and avenues of black poplar hybrids.

5.42 The river Great Ouse is important for eels, spined loach, tommy ruffe, lampreys and otter. Many dragonfly and damselfly species are also present.

5.43 The sound of skylarks, warblers and nightingales are to be heard in spring and summer and migrating geese are to be seen and heard in Autumn.

Policy

Policy HWNP6 – Retaining and enhancing biodiversity

Development is expected to protect and enhance biodiversity assets including species rich meadows, the River Great Ouse and areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the river. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, permission will be refused.

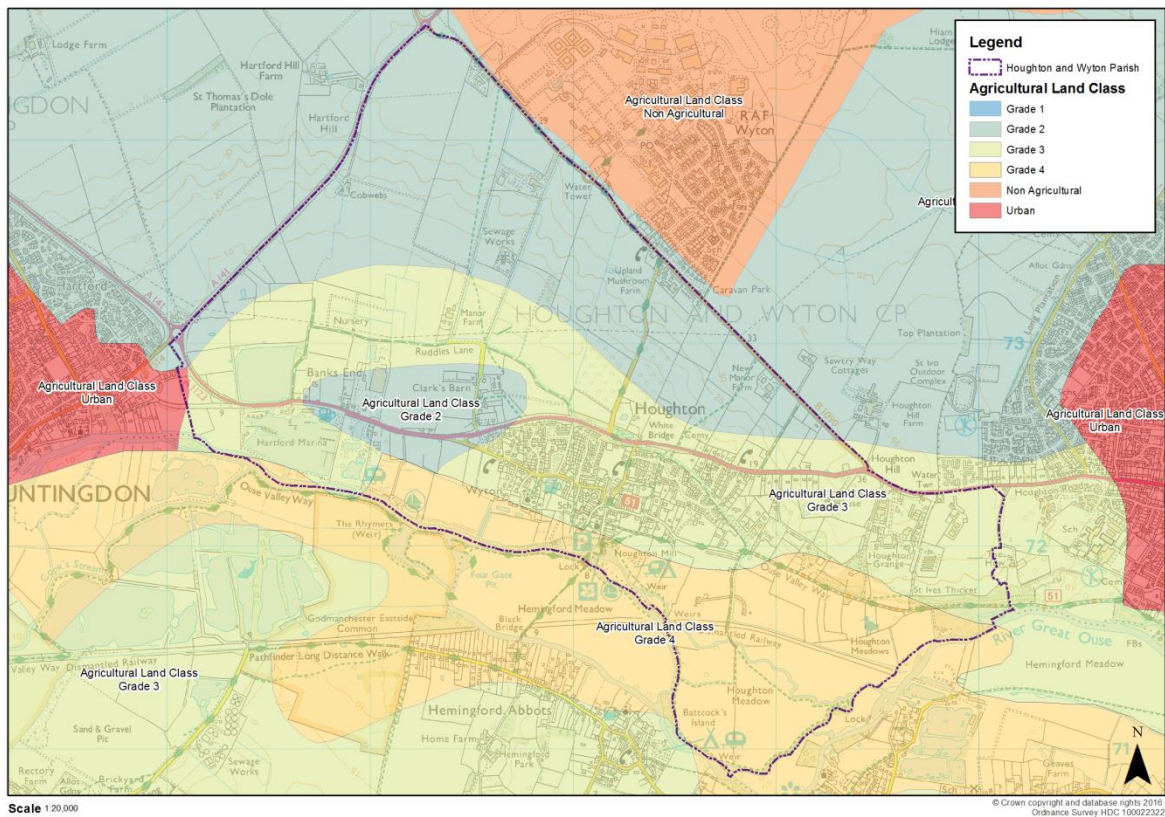
Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP6	1, 2, 4
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Protection of agricultural and grazing land

Policy Justification

- 5.44 The history of the parish is intertwined with farming and with cattle grazing before going to market at St Ives. Indeed the Splash on the A1123 was the watering stop for cattle travelling to market. With the loss of all the farms within the settlement has come the loss of grazing and agricultural land.
- 5.45 Figure 7 shows the agricultural classification of land in the parish. This shows that there is a significant amount which is classed as Grade 2 (very good) with a proportion that is also grade 3 (good to moderate).

Figure 7 Agricultural Land Classification



5.46 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states:

"Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."

5.47 Existing landowners who graze within the parish have highlighted the lack of grazing opportunities for farming their alpacas, cattle and goats. Policy HWNP7 therefore seeks to ensure that Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land can only be brought forward for development if it can be demonstrated that it has not recently been in agricultural use and has little prospect of being brought back into productive use in the near future. The land must not have been farmed for at least two years, a period intended to ensure that speculative applications for development of high quality agricultural land are avoided, whilst at the same time still providing an opportunity for agricultural land that clearly has no prospect of re-use to come forward and address any additional needs over the short term (i.e. the next five years).

Policy

Policy HWNP7 – Protection of best and most versatile agricultural land

Development of best and most versatile agricultural land (as defined in the NPPF) will normally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that significant development of agricultural land is necessary and no other land of a poorer agricultural quality is available.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5,10
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6 TOURISM

Tourism development

Policy justification

- 6.1 One of the key themes in the NPPF is supporting a prosperous rural economy. Within this it recognises the importance of tourism as part of that. Paragraph 28 states that neighbourhood plans should:

"...support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres."

- 6.2 Visitors to Houghton and Wyton are attracted to the National Trust Mill, Houghton Equestrian Centre, Huntingdon Wyevale Garden Centre, the River Great Ouse, and for the many walks and cycleways around the countryside and village. This tourism is one which respects the sensitive nature of the environment, in particular the species-rich meadows and the landscape stretching along the Ouse Valley.
- 6.3 Such 'quiet tourism' should be welcomed, recognising the economic benefits it brings to the local and wider community. The mantra of quiet tourism is, 'take only photographs, leave only footprints'.
- 6.4 Examples of the types of tourism which are acceptable include:
- Foot/cycle paths where they improve access to the parish, are safe and as long as no deterioration is caused to the environment.
 - Mooring or marine establishments on the waterways which conform to the environmental criteria identified elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Activities which do not cause harm to the network of protected habitats and landscapes.
- 6.5 The following indicates examples where changes to the tourism enhancement would not be acceptable because they would not accord with the principles of quiet tourism:
- Trail/dirt bike tracks
 - Large, regular music festivals.
 - River racing using high volume motor boats, river water skiing and wake-boarding.
 - Unauthorised camping/trailer sites.
- 6.6 Temporary activities may be considered appropriate but the location where the activities occur should be left in a condition as was originally seen and the natural habitat should in no way be affected by pollution or excessive noise.
- 6.7 The purpose of these policies is to attract day and residential visitors so that they can experience the beauty of the landscape, the agriculture, rural activities and attractions which help the parish develop economically through the creation of jobs and visitor spend. This must be balanced with the need to ensure that tourism development is appropriate and does not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of the community.

Policy HWNP8 – Tourism development

The development and expansion of tourism facilities, attractions and activities connected with day and residential visitors will be supported where the following criteria can be met:

- there are demonstrable economic and social benefits of the proposals; and
- there are no significant detrimental impacts on the existing community, and
- any impacts on the natural environment are capable of being adequately mitigated.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP8	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
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Provision of new tourist accommodation

Policy justification

- 6.8 If the tourist economy is to grow, then it is important that tourist accommodation should also be allowed to grow in Houghton and Wyton as well. However, such accommodation should be in keeping with the 'quiet tourism' offer of the wider area. Large scale tourist accommodation, mainly in the form of large hotels, is not considered appropriate because of the impacts that such large numbers of additional residential visitors are likely to have on local residents. In particular this relates to the additional levels of traffic that will be created on the local road network.
- 6.9 Again, the policies in the Huntingdonshire emerging Local Plan pertaining to the impact of development in the countryside should apply where relevant.

Policy

Policy HWNP9 – Provision of new tourist accommodation

Proposals for new tourist accommodation will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria can be met:

- **The impact on the existing road network would be acceptable;**
- **Pedestrian and cycle access to services in the village is provided wherever possible and ideally via footpaths and cycle routes; and**
- **There would be no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of any listed building in the Parish or the countryside**

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP9	5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16
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Change of use of tourist accommodation

Policy justification

- 6.10 There is a concern, based on several recent planning applications and permissions in the parish, that holiday accommodation is being changed into permanent residential dwellings. This has two impacts – firstly, it reduces the stock of holiday accommodation, thereby reducing the attractiveness of the local area for overnight visitors; and secondly, it increases the resident population of the parish, with the associated increased burden on services, in a piecemeal fashion.
- 6.11 It is appreciated that if holiday accommodation is no longer a viable business, then it may be appropriate to consider it for alternative uses. However, it is appropriate that any applicant for such change of use should have to demonstrate that the business is no longer viable. This should be done by providing substantial evidence to prove that the business is not viable as tourist or visitor accommodation. It is felt that 18 months is a reasonable time frame as this represents two trading seasons

Policy

Policy HWNP10 - Change of use of existing tourist accommodation to permanent residences

The change of use of existing tourist accommodation to permanent dwellings will only be permitted when it can be reasonably demonstrated that tourist accommodation is no longer viable. Evidence may include details of the business case and marketing of the property as a going concern at a market price over a period of months normally taken to be representative of two trading seasons.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP10	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11,16
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7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7.1 The intention of the policy in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan are to ensure that there is maintenance and further development, when required of enough locations and places to meet the recreational, educational, social and cultural needs of the residents of the parish.

Provision of new community facilities

Policy justification

- 7.2 A limited range of community facilities has been identified as being needed by the community at this present time. However, it is recognised that, over the plan period, it is likely that new or larger facilities will be needed. Also, existing facilities will need replacing once their ongoing maintenance is no longer financially viable.
- 7.3 Therefore, this policy seeks to provide general support for the provision of such community facilities, as opposed to identifying a finite list or specific locations for the provision of such facilities. It is recognised that the funding of such facilities is constrained and that the limited amount of residential development in the parish means that developer contributions will also be limited. Therefore, it will be important that the local community uses its resources to lever in funds through grants and other means in order to fund the bulk of the cost of any new facility. It is therefore important, where appropriate, that the planning process does not provide costly and unnecessary delays in their subsequent provision.
- 7.4 Where appropriate, the use of private facilities to address the needs of the community and general public will be supported. In particular this could include the provision of public conveniences to serve the village.
- 7.5 Other specifically identified items are a guided bus-stop and allotments. Preferred sites have yet to be identified.

Policy

Policy HWNP11 – Provision of new community facilities

The provision of new community facilities to address the identified needs of the residents of the parish will be supported. These needs could relate to new recreation, leisure, spiritual, social, education and medical facilities.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP11	5, 6, 7, 8, 16
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8 TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

Parking

Policy justification

- 8.1 There are high levels of car ownership locally – 1.56 cars per household in the parish of Houghton and Wyton as compared to 1.47 cars per household in Huntingdonshire district and 1.33 cars per household across the East of England region⁷. This partly reflects the rural location of the neighbourhood plan area but also the limited public transport that is available. The principle bus service (the 1A/1B) operates between one and two services an hour to and from Cambridge and Huntingdon but does not operate in the evenings. Given that there is not expected to be any increase in bus provision to serve Houghton and Wyton then the propensity to increase bus patronage is expected to be very limited. Therefore new development will bring significant numbers of additional cars that will have to find places to park.
- 8.2 In addition, new tourist development will bring more cars into the parish. It is important that a balance is struck between the benefits that this brings in terms of income from tourism, and the loss of amenity for local residents and businesses.

Parking in the village centre



- 8.3 It is important that new development adequately provides for the parking needs arising from it. In particular, development close to the centre of the village – along with additional tourist visits - is likely to create significant levels of on-street parking unless appropriate off-road solutions are provided.

⁷ Source: 2011 Census

Policy

Policy HWNP12 – Parking to serve new development/Houghton and Wyton village

Any proposals to provide additional public car parking to serve the village of Houghton and Wyton will be supported in principle.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP12	6, 7, 10, 14, 15
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Access by non-car modes

Policy justification

- 8.4 The community considers that the network of footpaths and cycle paths across the parish is a valuable asset. It wishes to expand this network, both for use by residents and by the tourists that are attracted to the area.
- 8.5 It is vital that, where possible, foot and cycle paths are provided that link to the centre of the village. This is where the majority of services are provided and the extra footfall, that these links will create, will serve to increase the viability of the shops and services in the centre of the village, whilst at the same time not worsening the problems with traffic and parking there. For example:
- From the equestrian centre on Sawtry Way to the cemetery
 - From Meadow Lane opposite the cemetery to the back brook
 - From Houghton Grange to the Thicket which leads to the village centre
 - From the Thicket (opposite the Elms) to the meadows and camp site
 - From Meadow Lane going east along the old railway line towards Houghton Grange
- 8.6 In addition, access to bus services is important to ensure that those without access to a car (in 2011, 9% of the households in the parish did not have access to a car⁸). Therefore it should be easy to access bus stops on foot from new developments that are creating additional movements.
- 8.7 Where there is currently a lack of provision of a good footpath and/or cycle path to the village centre and/or a bus stop within a reasonable distance, new developments which are creating additional movements must seek to address this by providing new access paths. Only where it is physically not possible or demonstrably unviable to make such provision will the policy not apply.

⁸ Source: 2011 Census

Policy

Policy HWNP13 – Access by non-car modes

Any development within the parish which creates additional movements will have to demonstrate that there is good access to the village centre on foot or by bicycle and/or that there is good access to an operational bus route. Where such access is lacking and there is a deliverable solution, new provision must be made towards addressing this.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP13	5, 10, 15,
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9 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

Policy justification

- 9.1 The parish is situated in a river valley with a river that regularly floods and is protected by a flood bank. The longer the river remains flooded the more surface water run-off accumulates in the ditches and the brook, and the risk of flooding increases until the river cannot remove the excess water. The longer the flood plain is covered in water the more opportunity there is of water leakage through the flood protection bank. Water can then flood roads, gardens, houses and parts of the sewerage system.
- 9.2 In the locality a further threat comes from leakage from the existing sewer system and the ongoing silting up of the River Ouse.
- 9.3 In the winter of 2012/13, the village came very close to major flooding problems, with Thicket Road impassable to motor vehicles on several occasions. The Parish Council also received several reports from residents that their houses were on the verge of flooding and that power had been lost, even with sandbags having been deployed.
- 9.4 The 2011 Great Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan, produced by the Environment Agency, identified the parish as being in a flood risk area where the risks are currently deemed to be appropriately-managed, but where the risk of flooding is expected to rise significantly in the future. The number of properties at risk from flooding in the Houghton/Hemingford/St Ives area could rise fourfold over the next century as existing flood defences are over-topped. Moreover, this assumes that there is no new development, yet within this area there are significant levels of new development already planned.
- 9.5 The NPPF states at paragraph 100 that, "Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk."
- 9.6 It is therefore considered prudent that, until new flood defences are put in place, a robust approach is adopted to new development, and developers must demonstrate that it will not cause problems with flooding and drainage.
- 9.7 It should also be recognised that flooding problems do not only come from surface water flooding but also from groundwater flooding. These issues in aggregate can serve to create the problems that have been experienced in recent years. Planning applications should therefore consider both issues jointly. If this serves to create an unacceptable cumulative impact, then an application should be refused.
- 9.8 Adequate surface water management is crucial to help Houghton and Wyton adapt to, and mitigate for, climate change. The National SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) Standards and Building Regulations Part H set out a clear hierarchy for surface water management and it is important that new developments manage surface water through SuDS rather than connecting into the public system

Policy

Policy HWNP14 - Flooding and drainage

Development will only be permitted in areas benefitting from defences where the sequential and exception tests are passed and residual risk of flooding has been considered and it can be demonstrated that the development will be safe.

Any development that which would reduce the flood plain storage capacity of a site will not be permitted unless an alternative storage facility is provided to compensate within the site on a level-for-level and volume-for-volume basis. Reference should be made to the SFRA maps which define the extent of the functional flood plain and any such facilities should be approved by the Environment Agency or other appropriate body.

Replacement dwellings and buildings will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding if it can be demonstrated that they will be substantially safer and will reduce flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change.

All developments will be expected to demonstrate that they have followed the surface water management hierarchy to ensure that infiltration and other methods of surface water disposal are considered and provided for ahead of maintaining any connection to surface water sewers. Such developments must demonstrate that, where possible, they have reinstated natural drainage flow pathways.

Any development increasing the demand on the drainage systems is required to provide written confirmation from the appropriate sewerage provider that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or that any required increase in sewerage capacity is completed prior to occupation of any part of the development.

Mitigation must be undertaken for all planning permissions for any cumulative impact of surface water and groundwater flooding that would be created by development.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP14	16
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10 BUSINESS

Providing for the needs of new and existing businesses

Policy justification

10.1 One of the key themes in the NPPF is supporting a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 28 states:

"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- *support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;*
- *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;*
- *promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship."*

10.2 There are over 33 businesses within the parish which does not include those working as sole traders. Over the plan period, it is considered vital to support local services and businesses in order that they may create employment opportunities for residents and local people.

10.3 In particular in a rural location, it is considered most appropriate to encourage small scale businesses which encourage and promote tourism and rural enterprise generally and/or benefit the local community. Many of these businesses will be start-ups and for these people, having access to low cost premises on flexible rents is of paramount importance. The provision of such flexible space within the parish will therefore be welcomed.

10.4 Another feature of the local economy is the enduring, but adapting, agricultural base. Whilst relatively small, it does provide local employment and makes effective use of the land. It is also adapting to new trends with the opening up of farm shops, for example. Such enterprises should be encouraged rather than stifled.

10.5 Support will therefore be given to proposals which demonstrate an active approach to providing sustainable commercial activity within the context of a rural parish.

10.6 The one caveat is the concern over sprawling development along the main routes that surround the built up area of the parish – namely the A1123, A141 and B1090 routes. Along these routes

there are more restrictions on new businesses, as these are not considered to represent the most appropriate locations for such development.

Policy

Policy HWNP15 – Provision for the needs of new or expanded businesses

Proposals for new or expanding businesses will be supported provided they are appropriate to their rural setting and respect the character of the village, the countryside and wider landscape including views in and out of the area. Any such use will need to ensure that its impact on light, noise and air is acceptable.

Proposals that provide suitable space for start-up or incubator businesses develop the Parish's agricultural base or increase retail space in the village centre are particularly encouraged.

The loss of existing retail or other community services and facilities will be resisted unless alternative or enhanced provision is made elsewhere in suitable and accessible locations in the parish or it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer viable.

New development along the A1123, A141 or B1090 should seek to retain existing trees, hedges and ditches wherever possible to protect the rural setting.

Any new development should not increase flood risk. Planning applications for development within the Plan area must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment in line with the requirements of national policy and advice, but may also be required on a site by site basis based on locally available evidence.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP15	6, 7, 8, 16
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11 HOUSING

Small-scale residential development

Policy justification

- 11.1 In 2011 there were 826 dwellings in the parish of Houghton and Wyton. The large majority are located in the village whilst the remainder are spread around the parish – mainly at Hartford Marina in the west and the Pine Hill Park development along Sawtry Way.
- 11.2 Like many old villages, development initially occurred slowly over many centuries and resulted in a stock of very individualistic housing. More recent developments over the last 40 years have tended to be medium scale and of a more similar type. However, the parish remains rural in nature and housing at the edges blends well into the countryside which completely surrounds it and provides the important separation, distinct from neighbouring settlements.
- 11.3 Protecting the separate identity of Houghton & Wyton is a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan, and retention of this surrounding countryside is crucial to retaining the distinctiveness of the village. Policy HWNP1 seeks to focus development within the built up area boundary, as defined in Figure 3 - development in open countryside should not be permitted if it would have the effect of reducing the separate identity of Houghton and Wyton. In addition, the policies in the Huntingdonshire emerging Local Plan pertaining to the impact of development in the countryside will apply to restrict any such development.
- 11.4 Looking over the plan period to 2036, the Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2013 demonstrated broad satisfaction with the mix of houses currently available, reflecting the broad range of accommodation that residents enjoy across the parish. This ranges from some permanent residency house boats and park homes, which offer low entry price into the area, through apartments to large detached properties.
- 11.5 The demographics of the village reflect those of Huntingdonshire generally with the largest proportion of the population being of retirement age. There is no significant growth- other than via tourism and through development of the Houghton Grange site in the east- envisaged in the local population and very low levels of net migration are expected (based on this limited growth and the popularity of the parish with those already living there). However, the Neighbourhood Plan Survey did highlight that over time there will be a gradual shift towards needing a greater proportion of accommodation for single and dual occupancy (77% respondents agreed) as well as dwellings specifically designed for the needs of older people (80% agreed). Residents want to be able to downsize as they get older but not be forced to move out of the village. Having a stock of smaller properties for downsizing also means that these older people will be more willing to move and release their larger properties back to the housing stock in order that they become family homes again.
- 11.6 Within this, there is also a need to provide affordable housing to address local needs. The neighbourhood plan area has a very low proportion of social rented properties – only 3% - yet for many people currently living in Houghton and Wyton, the price of properties on the open market is prohibitively high. In particular, some young families that have grown up in the village as well as older residents looking to downsize wish to stay living locally but cannot afford to do so. It is important that the provision of new dwellings reflects the needs of these people as well.

- 11.7 This is supported by the Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)⁹ which identified that one-person and couple households will make up the majority of the household increase from 2011 to 2031. In fact, they will represent 96% of the household change over that period.
- 11.8 Development through small-scale, incremental growth enables better preservation of the general housing mix and harmony with the existing character of the local setting and buildings. It is essential that the supply of any new homes is realised in accordance with the distinctive features, scale and grain of the local area. Housing sites must be carefully considered and will only be acceptable where they reflect these principles and are consistent with the neighbourhood Plan taken as a whole
- 11.9 The Huntingdonshire Core Strategy provides the spatial strategy for housing development across the District at present. However, the emerging Local Plan will supersede it and this identifies land at St Ives West for a mixed use allocation), including the land at Houghton Grange. This is the only site allocated or proposed for allocation within the parish.
- 11.10 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development, it is expected that there will be windfall sites that come forward over the plan period. It is important that they are of a suitable scale to be in keeping with the parish and the village (90% of respondents from the NP survey agreed with small scale developments) Given the restriction on development outside the built up area boundary, most of these small scale windfalls are expected to come forward within the village.
- 11.11 Development proposals that address the needs of the local population will be supported. In particular, this is housing that is suitable for the needs of older people but would also provide opportunities for first-time buyers. Specifically this will be:
- two-bed and also one-bed properties
 - housing for older people.
- 11.12 In order to provide flexibility, it is considered that self-build development should also be encouraged.

Policy

Policy HWNP16 – Windfall residential development

Residential development on windfall sites in the in the village that meets local needs will be supported. In particular, the provision of one or two bedroom units and housing that meets the needs of older people is particularly encouraged. Self build units will be supported on appropriate sites.

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP16	10, 13, 14, 16
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⁹ Cambridgeshire Insight (2013) *Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment*, for Cambridgeshire authorities

12 DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

Policy justification

12.1 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that:

"...neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

12.2 The Huntingdonshire emerging Local Plan also recognises the importance of design quality based on a thorough understanding of a site and its context. In particular, the Neighbourhood Plan considers the most important aspects to be:

- solutions which reflect their surroundings;
- proposals must contribute positively to the local character, appearance, form and pattern of development through sensitive siting, scale, massing, form and arrangement of new development and use of colour and materials;
- proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape, and avoid the introduction of incongruous and intrusive elements into views.

12.3 The community has identified design quality as an important issue in order to preserve the character of the village in particular and the parish in general.

Character Areas

- 12.4 A key consideration within the Neighbourhood Plan is to understand how certain areas define the character and feel of that community, and then identify where they are in order to make sure their importance is properly considered when making decisions on future developments.
- 12.5 The parish is characterised by its varied architectural styles, building density and layout, its road and footpath networks and its geographical setting. Together these elements confirm the village's identity as a small rural settlement.
- 12.6 The Neighbourhood Plan Survey recorded the importance that the community places on maintaining and protecting this small and rural character, both now and in the future.
- 12.7 Such areas of 'distinctive character' have been identified. It is important to note that the transitional areas between the distinctive areas are also important to the village scene where the same criteria should be applied, with reference to the relevant adjacent Character Area.
- 12.8 Key defining elements are identified under two headings - those which are common throughout the village and those which are specific to a particular road or street or part of the village.
- 12.9 The common distinctive character elements are:
- The lanes, footpaths and roads at the limit of the village, which have natural and largely untrimmed hedgerows.
 - The height and variety of the historic roof lines and separation between buildings and their interconnecting views.
 - Grass verges are regularly used to define the extent of the road, particularly in the older parts of the village.
 - The many and varied old and mature trees within the built environment. There are examples of such trees in both the older and more recently built areas of the village.
 - The pavements on one side of the road only.
 - The low density and period reproduction street lighting only extending as far as the last of the built envelope.
 - The limited use of white or yellow lines.
 - The low density use of road and street signs.
 - The use of cinder or gravel surfacing to footpaths.
 - The extent of natural and uninterrupted river frontage within the village boundary.
 - The generally low density of telegraph wires, satellite dishes, aerials or solar panels on the roof lines of buildings.
- 12.10 The Character Areas are shown in Appendix 1. Where Policy HWNP17 refers to these Character Areas, it is expected that development should have due regard to the guidance provided in Appendix 1 for the respective Character Area. This applies to the Character Area that the development is in and also to any Character Area where development that is adjacent to it will have an impact upon it.

Policy

Policy HWNP17 - Design of new development

New development will be supported where it can demonstrate that the following criteria are all met:-

- It respects the character or appearance of the village and its heritage assets including the Conservation Area and the setting of the Great Ouse Valley
- It responds positively to the heritage and distinctive features of any Character Area in which it is situated and pays particular attention to the site's topography and height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation and materials
- It is of a high quality design and, where appropriate, is of a distinctive and individual character
- It retains and incorporates, where possible, existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows and ponds
- It takes any opportunity available to provide safe, accessible and well connected footpath and cycle routes to the village centre, and
- Where the development is located at the edge of the settlement it takes account of, and respects the character of adjacent countryside by providing landscaping and / or developing at a lower height as appropriate to reflect its fringe location

Objectives addressed by Policy HWNP17	5, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16
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13 MONITORING

- 13.1 To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan, in its entirety, strives to deliver an improving quality of life for people in the parish, it is important that its progress is measured against an appropriate index.
- 13.2 The central theme of the Neighbourhood Plan is about improving quality of life. Therefore, it is appropriate that the index of monitoring targets is closely related to quality of life indices. This will be developed by Houghton and Wyton Parish Council in conjunction with the local community.
- 13.3 The monitoring of this index will be undertaken through a questionnaire survey, distributed to every person on the electoral roll. This will be undertaken at least every five years and the results shared and used to influence Parish Council decisions.
- 13.4 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of important actions which have not been included in the main body of the Plan. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. However, this is not to say that these actions are not important and they are contained in appendix 3 under Community Action Plan and will be reviewed regularly by the Parish Council.

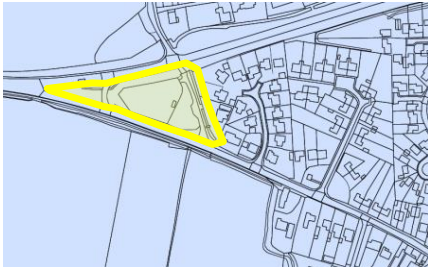
GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing** - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by the Huntingdonshire District Council.
- **Core Strategy** – the planning policy document adopted by Huntingdonshire District Council in 2009, covering Houghton and Wyton parish. This addresses strategic planning matters and the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, must be in general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy.
- **Emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan** – the document which, when adopted, will supersede the current Core Strategy. This Local Plan is addressing planning matters up to 2036 and includes strategic allocations which impact on Houghton and Wyton.
- **Intermediate tenure housing** - Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
- **Lifetime Homes** - dwellings that incorporate 16 design criteria which can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. In particular, it ensures that many disabled or older people are able to live within their own home as opposed to a care setting.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – the national planning policy document which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Quiet Tourism** – tourism which respects the character of the countryside
- **Social rented housing** - Housing owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** – an evidence base exercise undertaken by all local authorities to determine the amount of land that has theoretical potential for housing development. All sites put forward are considered for their availability, suitability and deliverability for housing. If a site addresses all of these requirements then it is considered to have theoretical potential for housing development; however this does not mean that the site will be brought forward for development or that a planning application will be granted planning permission. All sites for consideration are collated through a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise which invites anyone to put forward land for consideration through the SHLAA process.

Appendix 1 Character Areas

Figure 7 Character Areas

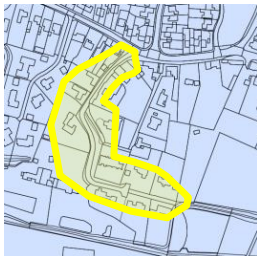
The Wyton end access road from the A1123



Manor Close



Rectory Lane



Church Walk



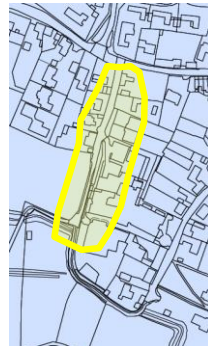
Ware Lane



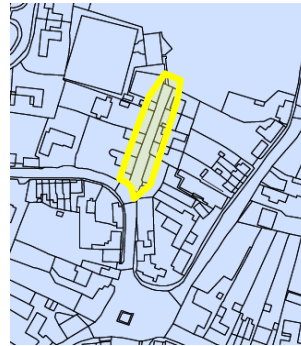
Victoria Crescent



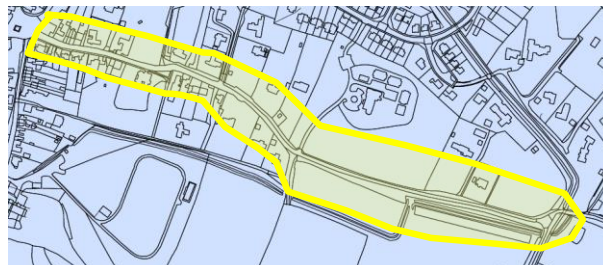
Green Lane



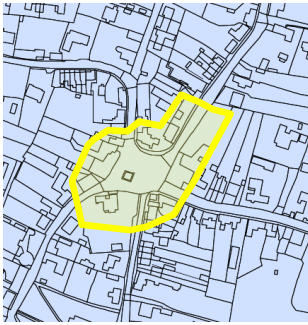
Laughtons Lane



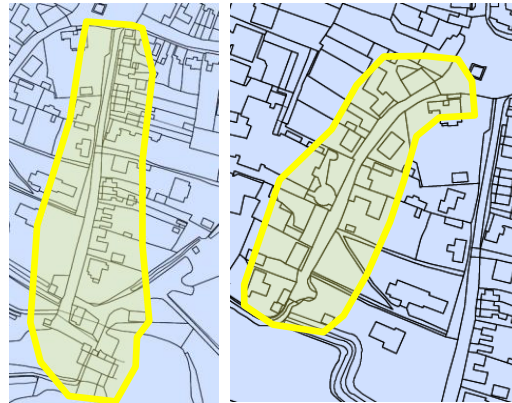
Thicket Road



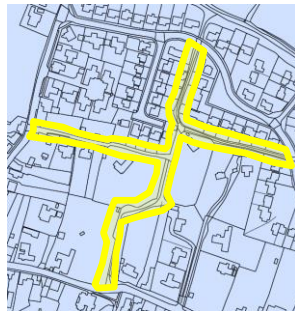
The village centre



Mill Street and Chapel Lane



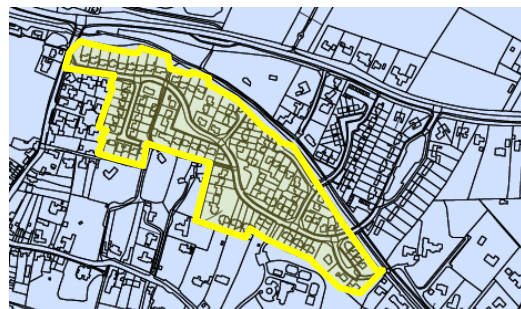
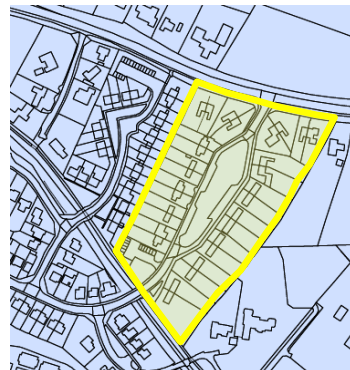
The Lanes



Love Lane



Hill Estate



Home Farm Road

The Wyton end access road from the A1123

- As the Huntingdon Road leaves the A1123 there are a limited number of low rise houses on the left which gives an open character to the village approach.
- There is scope to open up, and protect, the historic sheep splash on the left hand side, as a further character enhancing feature.

- There is also scope to define the rural feel of the village by softening the hard tarmac traffic prioritising entrance and exit to the village using more rural junction design incorporating rustic fencing, signage and grass verges and clear options for cyclists and pedestrians.



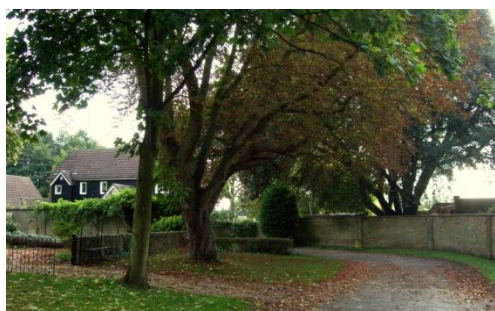
Manor Close

- The wide entrance road, with green verges on either side leads to a small estate of semi-detached houses built in the early 1920s.
- Each of the symmetrical pairs of houses have retained their rendered and painted exterior
- All have relatively large front and rear gardens separated by low level hedging, and each has off street parking provided by a wide driveway between each pair of houses.
- The estate provides an important size of housing in the overall mix of accommodation available in the village.
- This small estate represents an intact representation of a former council house design with generous plots sizes compared to houses being built today, with each house retaining its original appearance, finish and character.



Rectory Lane

- A rural no through road with grass verges and lined with mature trees with access to the Grade 1 listed Church of All Saints Wyton.
- Church Walk, an ancient connecting footpath between Rectory Lane and Huntingdon Road.
- There is a mix of older and modern low density housing with associated low levels of traffic which is in balance with the rural nature of the road.



Church Walk

- Church Walk is a regularly used historic footpath leading from Huntingdon Road, initially between old houses, down to the RAF cemetery and Wyton Church.
- There is limited vehicle access along a gravelled first section for residents of the houses on either side. The surface then becomes a natural rural footpath between old walls and established vegetation on either side as it reaches the church.



Ware Lane

- The ancient trackway is one of the original thoroughfares in the village of Wyton and part of the old main road between Huntingdon and St Ives. It has wide grass verges backed by ditches and hedges on both sides without any road markings and, due to the development of the A1123 past the village, is now a no-through road to vehicles, but still allows cyclists and pedestrians to leave the village towards the north.
- Ware Lane starts at Huntingdon Road. On the left is situated Loxley Green and the modern development of three-storey townhouses, with the 18th century manor farmhouse in the north-west corner. On the right are the modern Old Manor Farm flats.
- Housing development in the lane took place in the early 1970s and on the right hand side there are bungalows, and then dormer bungalows. On the left hand side there are two pairs of detached houses, all characterised by long front gardens and drives which bridge the ditches.



Victoria Crescent

- The houses on Victoria Crescent represent a unique architectural style in the village.
- Designed by Sir Colin St-John Wilson (architect of the British Library) who wanted to offer his own 'inside out' design style in a village environment, laid out in a closed crescent, built in the 1960s.
- Their collective character is of common single storey timber cladding over white exterior walls.
- The single road entry into and out of the crescent creates a private feel as well as preventing through traffic access.

- The building density coupled with the single storey construction has created an open feel to the estate, added to by the open and unfenced front gardens and wide road with verges.



Green Lane

- A no through lane, without pavements narrowing to a rural footpath beyond the school, offering important access to the school and the playing field.
- Unspoilt and open views from the lane across the playing field to the tree lined river bank beyond.



Laughtons Lane

- This is a private unmade road with limited vehicle access for residents.
- Laughtons Lane also provides a well-used pedestrian connection between the centre of the village and the playing field.



The village centre

- The centre represents an historic and important hub to the web of five roads into and out of the village.
- There is an important balance of village history and functionality represented by the clock tower, the Three Horseshoes pub, the old George and Dragon pub, the shop, the Potto Brown statue

and plinth, the listed telephone kiosk and water pump, the period garden wall at Whympers, which frames one side of the square.

- The seating outside the Three Horseshoes adds to the village centre street scene and acts an acceptable traffic calming measure
- There are important vistas from the centre. The church and its spire, the old and mature trees and the listed buildings around the centre.
- The absence of road markings, designated parking areas or the use of urban style signs.
- The limited use of shop signs, advertising signs or posters.



Mill Street and Chapel Lane

- Both are relatively narrow but have an open character helped by no on-street parking.
- Both have limited access with no through traffic use.
- Both have important historic buildings relevant to the village's history. The architectural styles are rich and variable including thatched roofs and those buildings with historical relevance, such as School House.
- The roof lines are varied with spaces between sufficient to provide interconnecting views to other parts of the village including to the Mill and the church.
- Mill Street in particular has a single pavement which changes to characterful cobbles in front of the row of thatched cottages.
- Signage and the entrance to the Mill are unobtrusive and don't dominate the immediate surroundings.



Thicket Road

- One of the longest and oldest access routes to and from the village, The Thicket has a wide and varied mix of old and listed properties.
- There is a single footpath on the right hand side at the more populated end, which becomes a grass verge away from the village centre.
- Grass verges without kerb stones define the extent of the road.
- The pavement runs out at the village limit, and becomes the Thicket Path after the White Bridge
- Along its length there is low density reproduction period lighting provided to the end of the run of houses.

- There is no through route for traffic via Meadow Lane (except for emergency vehicles) with priority given to pedestrians, horse-riders and cyclists using The Thicket for access to St Ives.
- There is limited street signage, or lines controlling parking, maintaining the rural character of the road.
- There are many old and mature trees along the length of The Thicket, and in the gardens of the larger houses. A low natural hedge and open metal railings afford views of the formal Elms gardens.
- Beyond the Elms, there are a small number of houses on the left hand side which all stand well back from the road. This, coupled with the lack of the houses on the right, and the open views across the fields to the river, all add to the rural character of this part of the village.



The Lanes and Love Lane

- These interconnecting Lanes represent historic cart tracks and footpaths offering routes between the village, the river and the Mill.
- Today The Lanes and Love Lane represent a well-used and popular network of unspoilt, natural rural footpaths with minimal street lighting, crisscrossing the village, as they have since the village was established.



Home Farm Road (excluding the three-dwelling development on the corner of St Ives Road built later)

- Home Farm Road represents a style of estate development of its time when it was built between 1968 and 1970.
- Houses are set well back from the road with large front gardens and relatively wide pavements.
- The frontages are laid to a variety of lawns or planted gardens but the overall feel is of open space, without the interruption of high dividing hedges or fences.
- The access roads comprise long sweeping curves which add to the feeling of space and widen the general panoramic views across the estate.
- Mature trees have been retained, which together with the green open spaces, adds a softening and pleasing character to the harder lines of the houses.
- The houses have been built with off road garages and parking which beneficially minimises any on road parking.



Hill Estate

- Built between 1947 and 1952, Hill Estate is a strong example of post war council built housing and layout.
- The red brick semi-detached houses are built on spacious plots with large front gardens.
- The houses face inwards towards the open well-kept green area with mature trees bringing an identity to the estate as a whole.
- The one way circulatory road is respected and contributes to free flow of traffic to and from the estate.
- There is a locally agreed stipulation that prevents on the verge parking. The estate has retained a period block of garages for use by estate residents.



Appendix 2 – Greens & verges

- Ware Lane verge by the side of Loxley Green - is to be managed for wildflowers which attract pollinators.



- The verges down the Thicket and in front of the Manor, The Gardens and Rose Cottage – whilst this might seem unnoticed, they are very much appreciated by residents and visitors as a contribution to village's open space character.





- Wildflower garden off Victoria Crescent - cleared of rubbish and planted in the mid-1990s, it is important to maintain this area for wildlife.



- The green spaces in St Margaret's Road and Home Farm Road - the green areas amidst the housing developments provide a breathing space and a place for trees to develop for all to enjoy.



- The Green at Hill Estate has provided informal recreation for both children and adults since the estate was built in 1952. The open space provides a green oasis for trees to develop and has been enjoyed in what would be an enclosed housing area.



- The Green at Loxley Green (between Huntingdon Road and Ware Lane) When the main farm in the parish, Manor Farm sold land and outbuildings to make way for the mixed housing in Loxley Green between 1975 and 1978, the Green was part of the old track to the farmhouse and maintains some fine old trees. It is used for informal play and street parties today.





- The Green in Warren Close is a small development of alternatively designed housing built between 1975 and 1978. The central green was once a pond and still retains the original willow trees that used to surround the pond. The pond was thought to be the remnants of a moat which once encircled an earlier house.





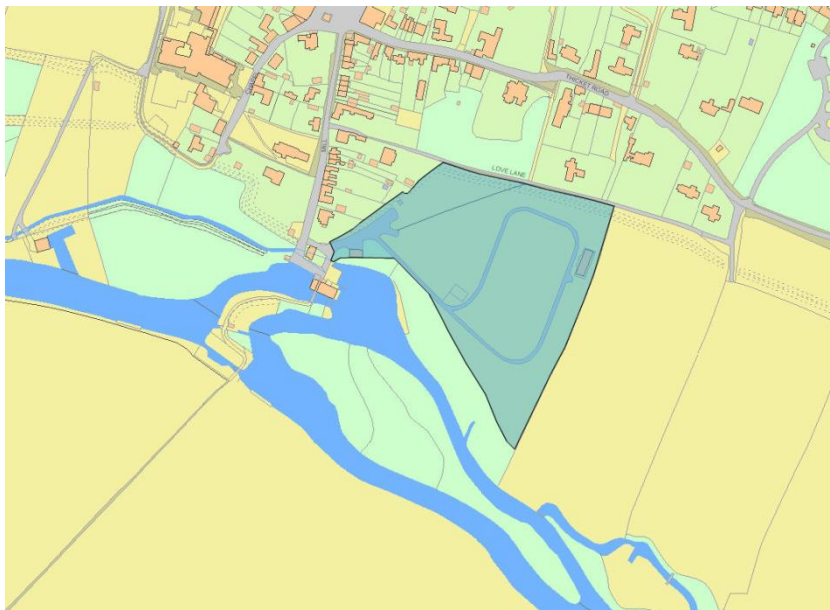
- Thicket Footpath – from the bridge at Thicket Road/Meadow Lane crossroads, down to Portabello Wood, the verge on the right hand side. This footpath is an ancient footpath said to have been used by Oliver Cromwell on his journey between home and school. The verge all along the right hand side provides a wild beauty and gives the path a very rural feel.



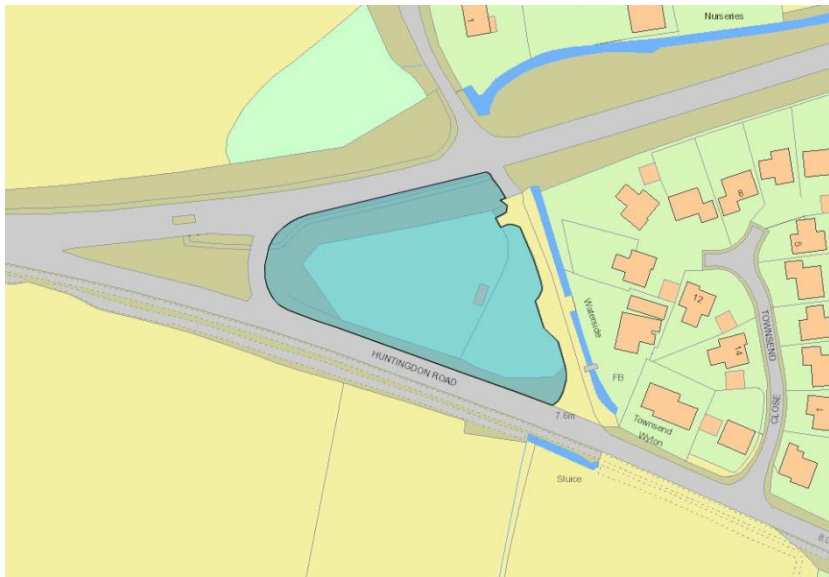
- The field on the corner of Thicket Road and Meadow Lane demonstrates ridge and furrow and provides the transition from the built environment to the open countryside and provides a sense of tranquillity towards the edge of the village.



- The National Trust car park and camp site is located at the end of Mill Street. Near the Mill is the car park and camp site, which lies on the backwater of the River Great Ouse. The camp site has been present since the sixties, initially targeted at anglers but then recognising the attraction for families and children to be able to play in the open fields. Under new ownership in the 1980s, a designated car park was established on the ridge and furrow field. Over 200 trees were planted in the 1980s which now provide a tranquil backdrop to the Mill as well as creating habitat for the associated wildlife. The car park and camp site were taken into the National Trust ownership in 1998. This now provides a valuable parking space for visitors to the village.

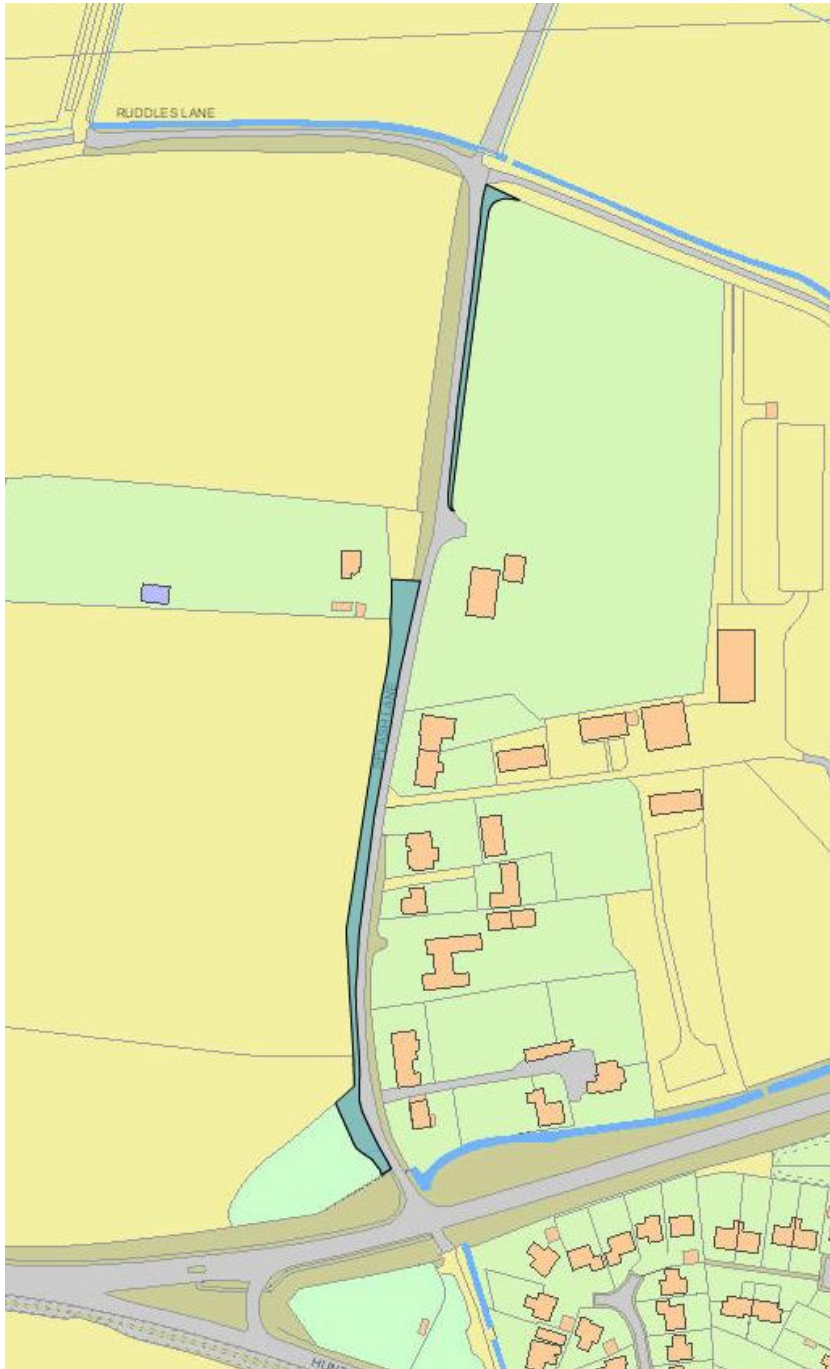


- The triangle at the crossroads of Huntingdon Road and A1123 is known locally as The Splash. Historically this green space has been used for agricultural purposes. It now provides an important visual amenity for the village entrance with its copse of trees. It is planned to be a community space which will include the planting of fruit trees to make a community orchard. The original Splash pond is important in managing the potential flood risk from the ditch nearby.



- Splash Lane - the verge on the left hand side as you travel up Splash Lane from the A1123 must be sensitively managed and will be planted with trees and shrubs to screen the housing as you approach the village from the west. The verge further up on the right-hand side is also important and needs to be managed as it is on the edge of the countryside and should the rural part of the village.





- Rectory Lane - in front of the old church (grade 1 listed) there is already the cover for a septic tank however the space needs sensitive management to ensure it remains a tree-inspired green space.



- Brookside- the triangle in front of the bungalows provides an important vista for the bungalows and to ensure it does not become a car park.





- Corner of Leslie Green Road and Meadow Lane the verge from Brookside up Leslie Green Road on the right-hand side is important for the trees, shrub cover and needs to be managed for wildlife.



- In front of Manor Close the two areas of green space either side of Manor Close entrance provide a green space to allow trees and bulbs to grow.

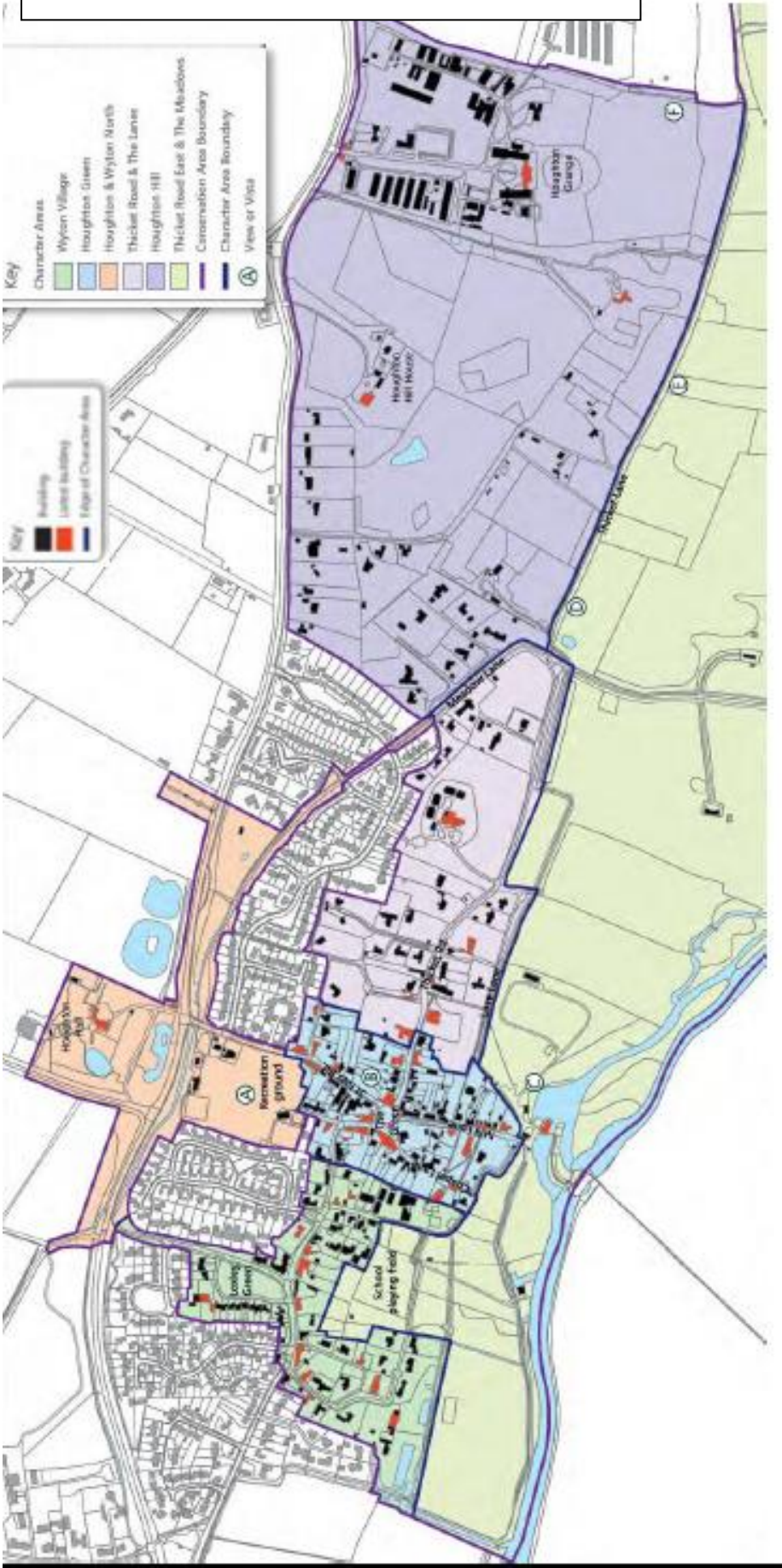


Appendix 3 – Community Action plan

The following list of actions have arisen out of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process:

Action	Lead body	Timescale
Time Bank	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Short - Medium
Bus Stops	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Medium
Review access across the A1123	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Medium
Review pedestrian access from Houghton Hill across the Back Brook towards home Farm Road	Parish Council and residents	medium
To monitor ongoing usage and requirement of community buildings	Houghton & Wyton Parish Council	Medium
The verges and greens will need to be subject to a separate management plan with relevant authority/landowner	Houghton and Wyton Parish Council	Short- medium

Appendix 4 Listed buildings



- **1, the Green**
Grade II*
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **1,2 and 3, Chapel Lane**
Grade II
1 Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **3, the Lanes**
Grade II
The Lanes, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Allanby Cottage**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Beth Haccерem Dolly Peg Cottages Thatched Cottages**
Grade II
Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Beth-haccерem 5**
Grade DL
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Black Horse Cottage**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Buckley House Thrae**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Church of All Saints**
Grade I
5 Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Dovecote Magdalene House**
Grade II
9 Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Durley Cottage**
Grade II
Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **East Lodge to Houghton Poultry Research Station West Lodge to Houghton Poultry Research Station**
Grade II
Houghton Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Elder Cottage**
Grade II
St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Fernleigh Small House**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Glebe Cottage**
Grade II
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

- **Holme Cottage**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Bury**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Hill House**
Grade II
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Mill**
Grade II*
Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Houghton Poultry Research Station**
Grade II
Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **K6 Telephone Kiosk by Clock Tower**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Ladymeere**
Grade II
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Little Dormers**
Grade II
Houghton and Wyton
- **Manor Farmhouse**
Grade II*
St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Manor Farmhouse**
Grade II
Loxley Green, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **May Cottage**
Grade II
4 St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Memorial Shelter and Clock Tower**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Mill House**
Grade II
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Millers Meade**
Grade II
Houghton and Wyton
- **Monument to Potto Brown**
Grade II
Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

- **Parish Church of St Mary**
Grade II
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Provender House Scrivener's Foodstore**
Grade II
1 Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Riverside**
Grade II
9 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Rose Cottage**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Schae**
Grade II
5 Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Silver Birches**
Grade II
St Ives Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Soma House Wayside**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Stuart Cottage**
Grade II
9 Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Stuart House**
Grade II
1 St Margarets Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Sweet Briar**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Thatched Barn at Rectory Farm**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Thatched White Cottage**
Grade II
Green Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Barn**
Grade II
Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Cedars**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Elms**
Grade II
Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

- **The Homestead**
Grade II
Green Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Lindens**
Grade II
Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Manor**
Grade II
Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Old Rectory**
Grade II
Mere Way, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **The Old Rectory**
Grade II
6 Rectory Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Three Horse Shoes Public House**
Grade II
2 Thicket Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Three Jolly Butchers Public House**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Tun Cottage**
Grade II
The Lanes, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **United Reform Chapel**
Grade II
Chapel Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Village Pump**
Grade II
1 Mill Street, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **Walden House**
Grade II
Laughton's Lane, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **West End Cottage**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire
- **White Cottage**
Grade II
Huntingdon Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire

PART B - COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Non-planning issues

(This does not form part of the statutory development plan – it contains community aspirations and Parish Council ambitions that cannot be included in policies in the Neighbourhood Plan)

Community Right to Bid

The Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value in legislation) is one of a number of new rights introduced in the Localism Act 2011.

The Community Right to Bid allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by Huntingdonshire District Council as an asset of community value. An asset can be listed if its principal use furthers (or has recently furthered) their community's social well-being or social interests (which include cultural, sporting or recreational interests) and is likely to do so in the future.

When an owner of an asset that is on the list of assets of community value wishes to sell building or land, a moratorium on the sale (of up to six months) may be invoked, providing local community groups with a chance to raise finance, develop a business plan and make a bid to buy the asset on the open market.

Houghton and Wyton has currently listed the following:

- The Three Horseshoes Inn, The Green, Houghton
- The Green, Hill Estate, Houghton
- The Green, Loxley Green, Wyton
- Ye Olde Village Shop

The Neighbourhood Plan survey findings identified the issues that are important to the local community. Some of the issues identified were non-planning issues and so cannot be included in the main body of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, these issues are important to local people. To show the community that their comments have been taken into account and will be addressed by the Parish Council, all non-planning issues are included in this section.

Non planning objectives

1. To use developer contributions for community infrastructure within the local community to address impacts arising from growth.
2. To consider actions to address transport-related issues such as traffic flows (both car and non car), parking and safety within the parish.
3. To encourage retailing of locally produced farm produce.
4. To encourage the development of existing sites with already approved planning permissions (Houghton Grange & Beers Garage site) to best meet the needs of the local community.

Community infrastructure

- 13.5 Huntingdonshire District Council has a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place. New development within the district will pay the relevant CIL charge and the funding pot will be used to address infrastructure needs. Of these proceeds raised within the parish, 25% will be given directly to Houghton and Wyton Parish to spend on addressing the impacts of growth. Whilst growth is not expected to be significant and therefore proceeds from CIL relatively low, it is important to prioritise this spending on particular issues.
- 13.6 The Parish Council will use CIL receipts to address the infrastructure impacts arising from growth. Priorities for infrastructure expenditure will be reviewed regularly and will be subject to change. These include:
- A traffic survey to address traffic issues in the parish and the village.
 - Creation of a plan to improve the traffic flows, parking and appearance of the village centre.
 - Provision of a site for a new non-vehicular river crossing.
 - Replacement of existing unsuitable infrastructure items with items suitable for a rural environment including bus shelters, street lights, rubbish bins, public signs (including information signs) and public seating.
 - Pedestrian/bridleway route between Houghton Hill to Meadow Lane giving access to Home Farm Road – across the Back Brook.
- 13.7 The Parish Council will work closely with all infrastructure providers to develop and deliver the relevant infrastructure
- 13.8 Priorities for infrastructure spending will be reviewed regularly by the Parish Council
- 13.9 Some of the infrastructure projects require cooperation with the neighbouring parishes and partners. It is the Parish Council's intention that through the Neighbourhood Plan it will continue to work with its neighbours and partners on the infrastructure projects.

14 Traffic and transport

- 14.1 The Neighbourhood Plan process identified a number of transport-related issues. In particular, there are issues of traffic flow through the village and parking at the village green which it is considered would benefit from a comprehensive transport study. The funding of this has been identified detail to be found in Part B , Community Aspirations.)
- 14.2 However, there are other matters which relate to highway safety (pertaining to access from new development), parking at new developments and access by non-car modes. When there is any development of the connecting infrastructure within the parish, including roads, footpaths, cycle-ways, bridleways and towpaths, then all aspects relating to safety of the user(s) will be a prime consideration. In particular the dimensions, type of construction and surfacing, and nature of its intended use, will be assessed to ensure the safety of any user.

Highway safety – access from new development

- 14.3 The nature of the rural roads, even very close to the village, is such that they can be quite dangerous by nature of their size and the number of blind bends. This is exacerbated by the significant levels of traffic that use the main routes surrounding the village, specifically the A1123, A141 and B1090.
- 14.4 It is therefore particularly important that new development which will access these busy routes is appropriate in terms of ensuring the safety of traffic. The creation of new additional access points is generally considered to increase risks to traffic safety. If new development has the opportunity to replace an existing informal access point with a new formal access point, then this is to be encouraged. A 'formal' access point is one that provides an officially adopted method of access onto a public highway as opposed to informal access provided by, for example, a farm track.
- 14.5 Furthermore, given the additional traffic using these roads, accidents and casualties are often observed to increase when buildings are located adjacent to the roads as opposed to being set back. In some cases, accidents have resulted in significant damage to buildings (and therefore also to the vehicles involved) because of their proximity to the highway. We will work with developers and the local authorities to ensure proposals for any new development site new buildings away from the highway. This will allow natural screening to address visual, noise and air pollution.
- 14.6 The existing trees, hedges and ditches act as a safety and – in the case of the trees and hedges – sound barrier between the road traffic and buildings. We will encourage these to be preserved rather than being removed and replaced with, for example, brick walls or wooden fences.
- 14.7 The A1123, A141 and B1090 are all through routes whose capacity and safety will be affected adversely by additional access points. Appropriate developments are encouraged by this Neighbourhood plan but the Parish Council will work to encourage any new developments requiring a new access point onto these roads and that go through and past the Parish to demonstrate the positive need for it in traffic terms, through modelling and analytical work, if they are to be taken forward. Furthermore we will seek evidence to demonstrate why the usage of an existing access point, even with improvement works, would not be more appropriate.

- 14.8 For developments fronting on to the A1123, A141 and B1090 roads, we will encourage new buildings to be positioned to maximise the potential of natural screening to minimise visual, noise and air pollution. This is also to protect the safety of road users along these routes.
- 14.9 The Parish Council will request that any trees, hedges or ditches along the edge of the roadsides to be preserved, except where provision for a new access point has to be made.

15 Retailing in the countryside

- 15.1 The creation and expansion of rural businesses can contribute towards a prosperous rural economy. However, whilst promoting a strong rural economy, the NPPF also recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, which is a valuable asset. Retail development in the countryside, if not strictly controlled, can also run counter to the objectives of sustainable development, by creating additional journeys to rural locations. It is therefore desirable to restrict development to that which primarily supports the active maintenance of land in agricultural and other appropriate land based uses, such as farm shops primarily retailing produce at, and produced upon, their own holding.
- 15.2 In considering such development, the Parish Council will support proposals where a significant proportion of produce, in terms of turnover, would originate upon the farm holding where it would be sold and providing it does not have a detrimental impact on the viability of the existing shops in the village. It would wish to restrict produce, which does not originate upon the holding, for sustainability reasons. The Parish Council will seek to resist retail proposals in rural locations where the business case is not considered to justify such a location.

16 Existing development sites - parish needs & intentions

Houghton Grange and Beers Garage Site

16.1 Houghton Grange is a significant asset within the parish. Located on the eastern edge of Houghton and Wyton village, the community wishes for it to be better incorporated into the village. This will enable it to serve the housing needs arising in the community.



16.2 The emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan proposes land at St Ives West for a mixed use allocation (Proposed Allocation SI1), including the land at Houghton Grange which is within the parish and closest to the village. However, the plans for Houghton Grange itself should respect its location within the parish.

16.3 Houghton Grange is a brownfield site incorporating an important listed building. Outline planning permission has been granted for up to 90 dwellings and it is considered that this provides the appropriate scale of growth to satisfy the housing needs of the parish and wider area over the plan period.

16.4 However, it is vital that this addresses the needs of the local community. The chapter on housing has identified that the predominant need is for smaller properties to address the needs of first time buyers and older people, as well as to provide for declining household sizes.

16.5 Therefore it is important that development at Houghton Grange provides a substantial proportion of smaller units. This would principally one and two bed properties, with two bed properties preferred as these provide more flexibility for occupiers as their needs change.

16.6 In particular, it is important that the needs of older people and those with disabilities are properly met 73% of respondents to the survey supported part of Houghton Grange to be a retirement community. The requirement to develop properties to Lifetime Homes standards will help to achieve this.

16.7 Development should also seek to provide an element of live/work units. They would provide potential for small businesses to continue to thrive in the parish.

16.8 In order to ensure that any proposals address the requirements of the local community, it is vital that they are properly planned. A step-by-step approach to the production of a coherent plan will help to achieve this. In the early stages, it is important that the community is involved

in shaping this plan and the principles that underpin it. This can only be achieved if there are events scheduled into its production which involve the community.

16.9 The intention of this section is to ensure that where live/work units are permitted, they do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on nearby residents.

16.10 Beers Garage Site is a brownfield development site in the heart of the village and conservation area. Whatever is constructed here will help define the character of the village for generations to come. It currently has outline planning permission for 4 terraced cottages with parking and gardens at the rear reflecting the adjacent Victorian terraced houses.

Houghton Grange

16.11 In order to provide for the needs of the local community, proposals for residential development at Houghton Grange ideally shall provide the following:

- i. A balanced mix of high quality accommodation, with at least 40% of the properties being two- and one-bed properties (with two-bed properties preferred).
- ii. A number of self-build plots.
- iii. Live/work units, with the opportunity to provide for an incidental amount of financial and professional service (Class A2) or office/research/light industrial (Class B1) use. Such uses must not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residences.
- iv. Development to Lifetime Homes standards.

16.12 In order to ensure that any proposals meet the needs of the community, it is vital that the community is involved in establishing the principles of any plan. Community events and activities to inform this should be undertaken in conjunction with Huntingdonshire District Council and Houghton and Wyton Parish Council and should ensure extensive engagement with the local community in shaping the outputs.

Beers Garage Site

16.13 To ensure the development of the Beers Site sits well in the character area this development needs to be one cohesive development of architectural merit and identity.

16.14 The community identified the need for a mixed development comprising:

- One- or two-bedroom properties to meet the need for the over 60s as 28% of village properties have single occupancy. Only 14 dwellings in the Parish have been built specifically for this age group and these were built in the 1970s.
- Community amenity to serve the parish and the 150,000+ visitors. This site provides an ideal location to base a 'resource centre' which could comprise information about the village, village history and the Parish Office.
- Further small and independent retail outlets sought by the residents.